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In such a situation, the president will have to take full responsibility on himself," he told the Congress of People's Deputies, where he is seeking agreement in principle on a new union treaty. That objective appeared ever more elusive yesterday when Boris Yeltsin, the Russian president whose ascent would be a cornerstone of any new political structure, accused Mr Gorbachev of trying to reimpose unlimited authoritarian rule under the guise

Recorded crime rise of 14% creates highest offence total

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

CRIMES recorded by the police in England and Wales rose by 14 per cent for the 12 months to the end of September to a new peak of 4.3 million offences, according to statistics issued yesterday by the Home Office.

Quarterly figures for July to September also released yesterday offered little comfort. Recorded crime rose by 16 per cent compared with the same period of 1989, making it one of the highest crime increases on record. The previous quarter showed a 17 per cent rise.

The figures indicate that 1990 will prove to be a disastrous reversal in the government's fight to bring down the crime rate, with an average increase in the first nine months of 16 per cent. The annual average increase between 1989-9 was 5 per cent.

The largest increases over the year were seen in the county forces. Leicestershire, with an increase of 29.5 per cent, was top of the 43 forces, while eight other shire forces showed rises above 20 per cent. Scotland Yard reported a

9 per cent rise. The Metropolitan police forces recorded an average rise of 10 per cent against an average 18 per cent increase among other forces. The only force not to show an increase was Merseyside, where offences dropped by 0.5 per cent.

Crimes against property accounted for 94 per cent, or 4.1 million, of the annual total of 4.3 million offences, with violent crime, at 246,000 offences, accounting for 6 per cent of the total. The overall increase of 548,000 offences in the 12-month period was due to a 300,000 rise in thefts, including 200,000 vehicle crime incidents.

Burglaries rose by 17 per cent to 945,000 offences, the highest percentage rise in any one group, and theft and handling by 15 per cent to 2.2 million offences.

Personal violence rose by 3.9 per cent to 182,000 offences, compared with a rise of 9.2 per cent in the previous 12 months. Sex offences rose by just 1 per cent to 29,000, compared with 6 per cent.

Police said yesterday that they

faced damaging financial cuts at a time when crime was increasing because of a decline in discipline, lack of parental control and poor personal security.

There is already speculation

that this year's increases have been caused by a rise in the public's reporting of crime due to insurance company demands,

greater policing on the streets, repeat offending by individuals released on bail, and a mild winter followed by a warm summer.

The figures show that car owners and manufacturers continue to ignore the risks of crime, leading to a 22.7 per cent annual rise in thefts of cars to 464,000 offences and an 18.4 per cent rise in thefts from vehicles to 728,000 offences.

A 16 per cent rise in burglaries from homes to a total of 497,000 offences calls into question the effectiveness of the neighbourhood watch system and televised crime prevention campaigns.

John Patten, minister of state at the Home Office, said yesterday that more than half of the increase in recorded crime was due to a rise in property thefts, particularly involving cars. "It seems incredible that the theft of and from cars reached 1.2 million during that time — a far cry from the 160,000 recorded back in 1960. Car registrations may have risen from 9 million to 24 million since then but unfortunately that is not the only thing that seems to have changed."

He said too many car owners were leaving their vehicles unlocked. "Victims should not be blamed for the crimes which hurt them but locking the car is something we simply cannot afford to forget. The moral is clearly 'lock it or lose it'."

On the overall figures Mr Patten said he was encouraged by signs that the increase in violent offences might be slowing. "During the period July to September, violent crime was just 2 per cent higher than in the same period last year. And sexual offences decreased by 1 per cent compared with the same period in 1989, following decreases of 5 per cent and 2 per cent in the first and second quarters of the year."

The Association of Chief Police Officers said in a statement that a recent international survey still made Britain one of the most law-abiding countries in Europe, and the country remains relatively non-violent. David Owen, chief constable of North Wales and the association's president, said: "There is no simple solution that the police can provide. We haven't got sufficient manpower to take on board all this crime."

Offences could not be shrugged off as merely petty incident. Mr Owen said: "A theft is a theft, whether you have stolen £5 off a widow or £25,000 from a bank. The bank as long as none of his staff is hurt, will shrug his shoulders, but the widow will be absolutely distraught."

• The retail trade, which is facing a 12 per cent increase in shoplifting, called on the Home Office yesterday to allow it to vet security staff for criminal records.

Tim McGough, senior executive of the Retail Consortium, said that the government should be more sympathetic to the request to have access to criminal records after a 26,000 increase in shop thefts during the past year to 241,700 offences.

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Vulnerable, cornered Kinnock must stop and think

When David Owen abandoned his year-long flirtation with Labour for a renewed dalliance with the Tories (he is a dreadful tease; he will never join them either), it was clear that Neil Kinnock's party was in trouble.

Dr Owen may have made a few mistakes in his own political career, but he is a shrewd reader of other people's fortunes. The question being asked now is: "Can Labour beat a compromise Conservative party?"

Two months ago there was a certain symmetry about British politics. Both the main parties were led by people whom the supporters of the other fervently

wished would continue leading them up to the next election. Neither had a new "Big Idea" to offer for the politics of the Nineties.

Now the Conservatives have removed the leader whom they too had convinced themselves had become an electoral liability. They have discovered that if you have a new leader, you do not really need a new big idea and that the "classless society" will do.

Labour, still bereft of their new inspirational theme, are left with the longest serving leader of the Opposition this century, greeted when he comes to the dispatch box with gleeful cries of "Don't resign" from Tory hecklers.

Precisely a year ago I wrote up

Neil Kinnock as my politician of the year on the ground that his achievements were much undervalued. In reforming the party organisation, weeding out Militants, revamping policies and giving Labour back the will to win, he made his party look once more capable of government.

He has made Labour outwardly safe for social democrats to return to, marginalised the hard left and begun to loosen the trades union stranglehold.

He deserved at least some of the credit, I argued, for Labour's emphatic lead in the opinion polls. More than that, he deserved the credit for lifting himself from the depression of 1988 when the Tories had looked invincible and

the newspapers had been full of headlines about "The leader who lost his way".

But Mr Kinnock now faces an even greater test. Lifting a party from long-term despair when you have taken over with its fortunes at rock bottom is one thing. Lifting it again after you have seen the biggest ever opinion lead over the Tories melt away under your leadership and become a Labour deficit is another task altogether, especially in the face of a whispering campaign that you were never quite up to the job anyway.

There is no threat to Mr Kinnock's leadership; the cum-

bersome machinery sees to that. But there must be a threat to his self-confidence and to the morale of the parliamentary party.

So how are the Tories under John Major to be beaten? What does Mr Kinnock do for his next trick? More policy documents will not do the trick. Labour's policies have already had more relaunches than Dame Nellie Melba had hot dinners.

It may be frustrating for him while the honeymoon lasts, but Mr Kinnock would be wise to mute his attacks on Mr Major at this stage. The new Tory leader is an aspirin politician, a man designed for lowering the political temperature.

Labour has to stop and think.

EC. Where the Opposition surely can go after the government is on the question of public services and the quality of life. Government politicians express their concerns. But do they produce the money to support them?

Then there is the little matter of the economy. To give his party a chance of winning the election on the economy, however, Mr Kinnock will have to give maximum exposure between now and then to the shadow chancellor John Smith, the man who would be his most potent rival if he does not deliver an election victory.

That, surely, is a risk he has to take.



Peers speak up for women

Part-time workers should have state and occupational pensions schemes and also entitlement to holidays, redundancy pay and seniority allowances in proportion to those accorded to full-time workers.

A House of Lords committee reports today that such benefits, recommended by the European Commission in draft directives, would be a step towards creating equal opportunities for women.

The committee also declares its view that improving the lot of part-time workers in this way would not have an adverse effect on employment opportunities, quoting France and Sweden as countries where employment protection legislation had been extended to part-timers.

Pension bill introduced

A Labour MP's bill to link state retirement pensions to average earnings instead of the retail price index was given an unopposed first reading, but has no prospect of ultimate enactment.

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North, Lab) moved the elimination of poverty in retirement bill to provide also for appointment of a minister for retired people.

He said that it was timely because, despite arctic weather, cold weather payments had not been triggered.

Art for tax

In the past month two works of art have been accepted by the Treasury in lieu of tax. Tim Renton, the arts minister, said in a written reply. They are a Sevres dinner service of 350 pieces and a Louis XV *bas d'armoire* by Bernard Van Risenburgh. They are to pay a tax bill of £1.4 million.

Jail deaths

Forty-eight inmates in prison establishments have died at their own hands this year. Angela Rumbold, Home Office minister, said in a Commons written reply. A verdict of suicide has been returned on 19 and inquests on 19 were still to be held.

Gulf tax

Francis Maude, financial secretary, Treasury, is considering the tax position of those who have lost income tax exemptions because they have been obliged to return earlier than the had expected from Kuwait and Iraq.

Parliament today

Commons (9.30): Christmas adjournment debates on various subjects.

Lords (11): Civil Jurisdiction and Judgements bill and Caravans (Standard Community Charge and rating) bill, second readings. Short debate on Leeds and Brixton prisons.

Dissolution honours list is due tonight

By RICHARD FORD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MARGARET Thatcher's resignation honours list will be published at midnight tonight.

The list, in which the former prime minister is expected to honour those who were closest to her in Downing Street, is likely to be substantial given that she was in office for eleven-and-a-half years.

Sir Harold Wilson's resignation honours list in 1976 contained 42 names, including nine life peerages. Those honoured with a peerage included Sir Joseph Stone, his personal physician, Sir Bernard Delfont and Sir Lew Grade, Sir Joseph Kagan, the maker of Gannex raincoats and Sir George Weidenfeld, the publisher.

The list also included eight knighthoods and ended with four British Empire Medals which were given to staff at 10 Downing Street, including the senior mes-

Boost for Field as the Labour leadership orders fresh enquiry

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR NEC

FRANK Field received an important boost in his campaign to save his parliamentary career yesterday when the Labour leadership ordered a fresh enquiry into his local Birkenhead party and delayed its proposed reselection timetable.

A relieved Mr Field said last night that the decision of the ruling national executive to suspend meetings of the Birkenhead party pending further investigations would raise Labour morale on Merseyside and the party's esteem in the country. A key factor

in the decision was a letter written by constituency officers criticising local party members and giving evidence to the NEC enquiry.

local party members correcting what party headquarters consider to be inaccuracies in the letter circulated by the chairman and secretary of Birkenhead. She will investigate the selection of candidates for next May's council elections, the activities of the anti-poll-tax federation in the area, and consider whether action should be taken against members of the banned Socialist Organiser.

The investigation means that the local party's hopes of re-running the reselection immediately have been dashed, although Mrs Gould is to report back to the next NEC meeting in January.

Neil Kinnock's customary overwhelming majority on the NEC was reduced as some members who have lost patience with Mr Field's high-profile campaign voted against him.

The investigation was backed by nineteen votes to six. Those opposing it included two members of the shadow cabinet, John Prescott, the transport spokesman, and Jo Richardson, spokesman on women's rights. The others were Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Eddie Haigh, of the transport workers' union, and Bill Connor, of the shipworkers' union Uscaw.

Some on the left have claimed that the protracted procedure has been designed to prevent a further reselection taking place before the next general election. In those circumstances Mr Field would be imposed by the NEC as the candidate.

Mr Kinnock, however, told the meeting: "Nothing we are doing is about defending one individual. The Labour party insists on fulfilling the requirements of natural justice, the party constitution and the NEC's own decisions. We will uphold these without fear or favour."

Supporters of Mr Field believed last night that the NEC's intervention against the local party and the suspension of party meetings would sway the ultimate vote in his favour.

Mr Skinner said Mr Field should abide by the rules like everyone else. He added: "I do not think they will ever satisfy Frank Field. Once they have delayed it until January, I think they will come up with another set of proposals to investigate."

David Blunkett said the further delay was the only way forward in Birkenhead because both sides had "made such a terrible mess of things". The constituency party was circulating material and continuing what could easily be interpreted as intimidation, particularly of women members.

Mr Field said the decision would raise the spirits of party loyalists and Labour voters on the Wirral. "It will raise our standing in the country as voters see Neil Kinnock doing everything in his power to see the party is ready for government."

He believed that the enquiry would find that the NEC recommendations had not yet been fully carried out.



Field: "Decision will raise party morale on Merseyside"

Interest rates 'must be cut soon'

By JOHN WINDER

ECONOMY

INTEREST rates should be cut soon, John Biffen told the Commons last night. He called for a growing volume of protest against present terms of British membership of the European exchange-rate mechanism which were "wholly disadvantageous for this country".

Mr Biffen (North Shropshire, C), a former cabinet minister and chief secretary to the Treasury, used the motion setting the dates of the Christmas recess to sound the alarm about the deepening recession which, he said, must by now be evident throughout the economy, and which was made much worse by the fixed exchange rate that inhibited exchange-rate policy.

Whatever expectations had been aroused by the one percentage point cut in interest rates at the time of British entry to the ERM had not been fulfilled.

There was still talk about the recession being short and shallow, but he saw little anecdotal evidence to persuade him that the recession was of that character. In many areas of the economy they had already been in recession for a considerable time, and that made nonsense of the proposition that it was to be a short experience.

Calling for a reduction in interest rate, he said that nobody looking at the general pattern of demand and of monetary control could suppose that we were in a lax monetary situation that could not admit of a further reduction.

"I have a feeling that the reluctance of the government to undertake a cut is an inhibition they feel on account of ERM membership."

If membership of the ERM had not been effected at an appropriate parity, there would be a perpetual disadvantage to British industry, just as the return to the gold standard at an unrealistic figure had thrown its shadow over the economy in the Twenties and Thirties.

Inflation difficulties in recent years had derived precisely from the fact that the government had tried to shadow the deutschmark a few years ago. He likened the ERM to Lubianka prison, in order, he said to show that he was a broad European.

Managers blamed for Tube loss

MPs BLAMED poor housekeeping and forecasting errors yesterday for London Underground's losses of £52 million this year (Sheila Gunn writes).

In a report to be published next month on the increasing debts, the Commons transport committee criticised financial controls and over-optimistic predictions of income from fares and property sales. New safety measures also added to this year's costs.

The report comes after a hearing earlier this month when MPs accused London Underground executives of failing miserably to control costs. In new written evidence, the company admitted the gross deficit had been re-estimated at £93 million, bringing a net shortfall of £52 million.

The report said: "The precise causes of the deficit remain obscure. There were financial setbacks, some of which were foreseeable; a need to implement safety measures more quickly than expected; and poor housekeeping."

London Transport's forecast of a 9 per cent increase in income from passengers was described as optimistic guesswork.

Mr Wilfred Newton, the company chairman, told MPs that "financial systems and procedures were not all they should have been" and blamed inadequate communication between accounting and finance managers.

The Commons report concluded: "These appear to be understatements given the time it took for London Underground to realise that its financial position was unsound."

'Tricky' tobacco firms are under fire

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL REPORTER

PASSIVE SMOKERS

ALLEGATIONS were made to a parliamentary enquiry yesterday that the tobacco industry indulged in tricks to mislead the public over the health hazards of passive smoking.

Executives of Ash (Action on smoking and health) demanded legislation to protect non-smokers from the dangers of inhaling cigarette smoke in all public places and at work.

David Simpson, director of Ash, told the Commons environment committee: "The tobacco industry has a long history of misleading the public and making statements that are not scientifically true. It would like people to believe that nothing has been proven. It has set up bogus conferences that pretend to be an open scientific forum but which are stacked with tobacco industry scientists and where the proceedings are published before the conference takes place."

James Callaghan's dissolution honours in 1979 contained fifty names and included ten life peerages and seven knighthoods. Among those awarded a knighthood was Thomas McCaffrey who had been chief press secretary during Mr Callaghan's years as prime minister.

rights of the non-smoker to breathe clean air must exceed the rights of the smoker to pollute it."

Mr Simpson said that most people felt indignant being exposed to a health hazard. The health risks of working in an asbestos textile factory were about the same as contracting lung cancer from environmental tobacco smoke (passive smoking).

Sir Richard said that there were no health risks from inhaling most toxic materials below a certain threshold.

"When you are dealing with cancer, unfortunately we have to assume there is no such thing as a threshold level. You will not eliminate the risk unless you eliminate the nicotine."

Dr Noel O'Brien, director of public health with Hampstead health authority, said: "We do believe that we have reached a stage where the voluntary approach has gone as far as it can and we need legislative support." The

Dissolution honours list is due tonight

By RICHARD FORD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

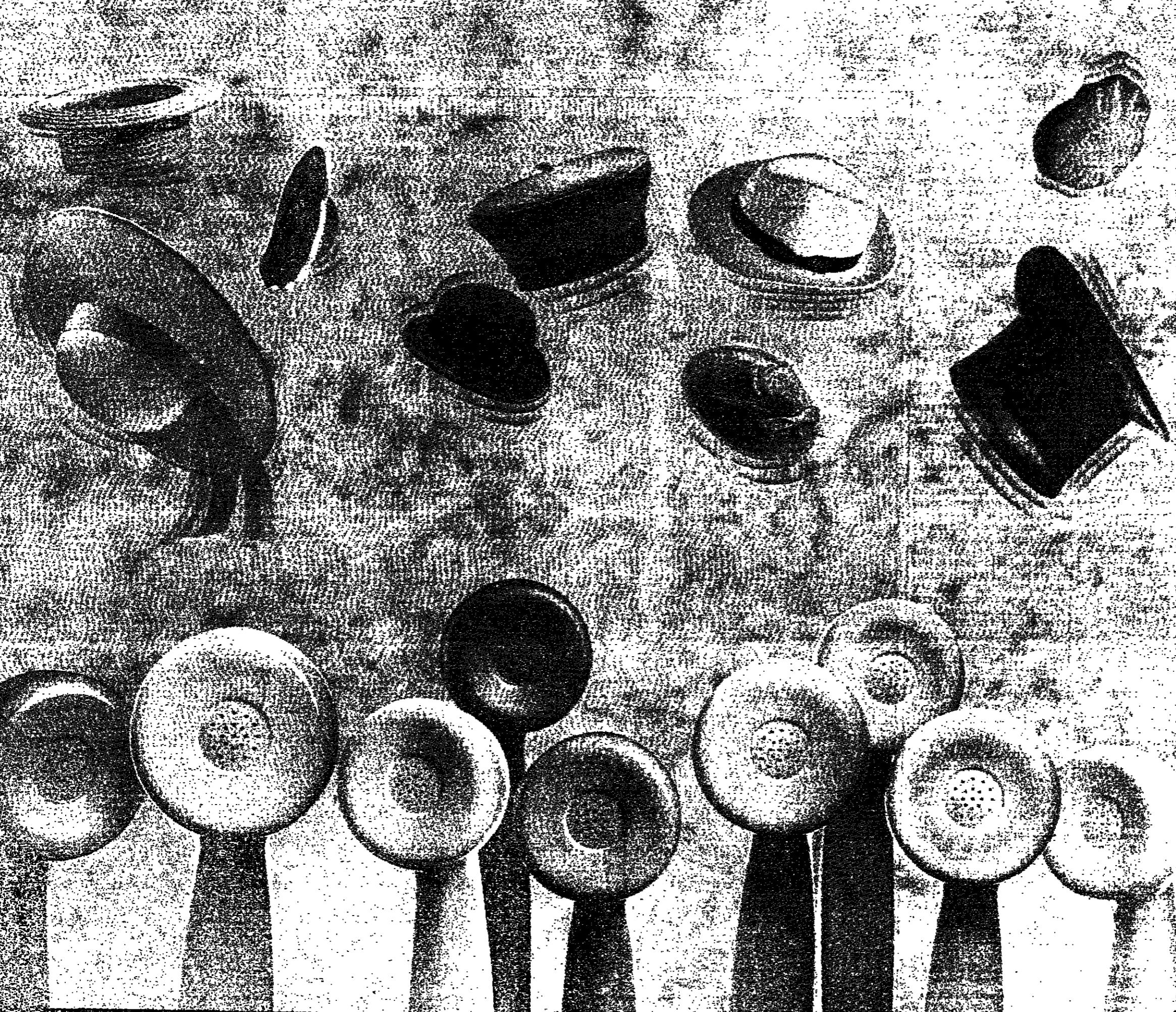
MARGARET Thatcher's resignation honours list will be published at midnight tonight.

The list, in which the former prime minister is expected to honour those who were closest to her in Downing Street, is likely to be substantial given that she was in office for eleven-and-a-half years.

Sir Harold Wilson's resignation honours list in 1976 contained 42 names, including nine life peerages. Those honoured with a peerage included Sir Joseph Stone, his personal physician, Sir Bernard Delfont and Sir Lew Grade, Sir Joseph Kagan, the maker of Gannex raincoats and Sir George Weidenfeld, the publisher.

The list also included eight knighthoods and ended with four British Empire Medals which were given to staff at 10 Downing Street, including the senior mes-

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As the prime minister crosses the Atlantic, The Times explains the ties linking London and Washington



Stars and pinstripes: images of togetherness, from left, Ronald Reagan and Mrs Thatcher, Harold Wilson and Gerald Ford in 1975, Harold Macmillan with John F Kennedy in 1962, and President Roosevelt with Winston Churchill in 1943

America focuses on British leader

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

JOHN Major has been given the ultimate accolade that the United States can confer on a visiting foreign leader: he has been invited to appear, within a few hours of his arrival here tonight, on all four national breakfast television shows.

There is considerable public interest in the new British prime minister, and not just because Americans want to judge for themselves whether he measures up to their beloved Margaret Thatcher.

They also want to reconcile the conflicting caricatures that appear in their newspapers. On one hand, their interest is titillated by widespread, and scarcely accurate, descriptions of him as the son of a trapeze artist and being a high school dropout. On the other, they read that he has all the

charisma of a provincial bank manager. A much more serious assessment of the man will take place tomorrow evening at Camp David, the presidential retreat, where George and Barbara Bush, supported by Brent Scowcroft, the national security adviser, and Henry Cato, the American ambassador in London, will play overnight hosts to John and Norma Major, who will be accompanied by Sir Antony Acland, the British ambassador, and Lady Acland.

The two leaders have weighty issues to discuss, and have set aside several hours for that purpose, but, primarily, this is, in the words of one official, "a put-up-your-feet and get-to-know-you session". They met briefly at the White House when Mr Major visited

Washington as foreign secretary in September 1989, and even more briefly at the Houston economic summit last July when Mr Major was chancellor, but they hardly know each other.

Personal chemistry plays a powerful role in international affairs, as Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan demonstrated. Officials here predict that, in spite of their contrasting backgrounds, with one raised in poverty in south London, the other privileged and Yale-educated, they may have more in common than the pragmatic Mr Bush ever did with the idealistic Mrs Thatcher.

Tomorrow morning, Mr Major meets James Baker, the secretary of state, Vice-President Dan Quayle, and possibly Nicholas Brady, the

treasury secretary, and Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, before lunching with Thomas Foley, the House Speaker, and other senior congressmen on Capitol Hill. He then flies to Camp David for talks before dinner.

The three big issues on the American agenda are the Gulf conflict, the breakdown of the Uruguay round of Gatt talks to liberalise world trade, and how Nato will be affected by the drive towards a stronger and more unified European defence and security structure. The Americans are more concerned than they have let on that this could lead to a diminution of Nato.

The White House has been gratified by the British contribution to Operation Desert

Shield and there are no policy differences. Mr Bush will discuss the prospects of war and run through possible scenarios.

Gulf is likely to be the most contentious issue, with the administration infatuated by what it sees as European intransigence on reducing farm subsidies, the issue which led to the collapse of the global trade talks on December 7. Mr Major, who favours EC agricultural reform, will seek to rescue the talks by playing the role of conciliator. American officials signalled that Mr Bush would continue to demand subsidy reductions well beyond those offered by the European Community.

Mr Major may also find himself acting as a bridge between the US and the less Atlanticist European nations on Europe's future defence structure. The US supports the Franco-German idea of creating a much stronger European defence "pillar" so long as this does not threaten Nato, a view shared by Britain.

The attempt to set up direct talks between Washington and Baghdad, immediately after the UN resolution authorising the use of force if the deadline was not met, was a demonstration of Mr Bush's eagerness to see how far he seeks to take over the role of America's special representative in Europe, a role which, real or imagined, has always complicated Britain's relationship with EC partners.

The talks will be dominated by the Gulf, Gatt and European defence, although South Africa, the Middle East peace

BY ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN Major's pre-Christmas trip to Washington tonight for talks with George Bush is essentially a relaxed, getting-to-know-you exercise, so that both leaders can chat together and sound each other on important issues. It will give President Bush the chance to put the new prime minister on the list of world leaders he telephone regularly.

Officials on both sides expect them to get on well. Both are pragmatists, quiet in style and ready to tackle detail. With Mr Major there will be none of that tension which underlay the outwardly friendly relationship between Mrs Thatcher and Mr Bush: as a new boy on the world scene Mr Major does not threaten to upset the president as the West's senior statesman.

There will not be that special chemistry that bound together Mrs Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Mrs Thatcher and Mr Bush had veered apart on German unification and the pace of European integration, when he called last December for "a continued, perhaps even intensified, effort of the Twelves to integrate". That appeared to be a signal that Britain would be taken seriously in the United States only if its twelve European partners were prepared to take it seriously.

But Mrs Thatcher's swift commitment of British troops to the Gulf, her rapid backing of the United States in Panama, and the British reminders to Europe about American concerns on defence spending assured Mr Bush that Britain and America continue to have

shared values as well as a conference and the future of common language.

Mr Major can be expected to be less sensitive about the Washington-Bonn axis. Mrs Thatcher never had good relations with Helmut Kohl. Her successor went out of his way to the Rome summit last weekend to establish a first-time relationship with the German chancellor.

Mr Major's biggest test in Washington will be the eleven pairs of eyes watching him from Europe. After his efforts to signal Britain's willingness to move towards a common EC goal, they will be anxious to see how far he seeks to take over the role of America's special representative in Europe, a role which, real or imagined, has always complicated Britain's relationship with EC partners.

The talks will be dominated by the Gulf, Gatt and European defence, although South Africa, the Middle East peace



Major: eyes of the EC's leaders will be on him

did raise the issue with some force in bilateral talks with Herr Kohl and President Mitterrand.

Mr Major may not say all that Mr Bush wants to hear. He told reporters in Rome that, while it was agreed that severe damage could be caused internationally if there was not a successful outcome to the Gatt round, "it was equally clear that it will not be necessary for all the concessions and changes to come from the community".

The meatiest discussion may well be on the future shape of European defence and security arrangements. While the Americans express enthusiasm on European unity and the development of a "European pillar" within Nato, they are worried that such a development could see Europe taking decisions on defence questions and then presenting the US with a "take it or leave it" ultimatum.

Britain has been assured that America has no intention of backing off and that Congress would certainly sanction war after January 15, but Mr Major will want to make his own assessment.

The breakdown of the Gatt talks is certain to figure in discussions with President Bush. The prime minister has been criticised in some quarters for failing to play up the Gatt issue sufficiently at the European Council in Rome, but officials say that that was a deliberate tactic.

The name of the game in Rome was to avoid public confrontation, to underline the difference from the previous management. Mr Major

bassy does not even have a signed photograph of him beside those of past prime ministers and royalty.

Officials can seem defensive about the embassy's size. But Britain is the largest foreign investor in the United States apart from Japan. It has consulates in Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago, San Francisco, Cleveland, Miami, Dallas, Houston and Seattle. Still, even in a city of almost 150 diplomatic establishments, the British embassy is big, employing 334 people.

Most of these work in an office block overlooking the wooded grounds of the home of Dan Quayle, the vice-president, and a stone's throw from a statue of Winston Churchill, giving his victory sign to the four lanes of commuters en route to the city.

Embassy 'busy guys' smooth way

FROM SUSAN ELICKOTT IN WASHINGTON

UNDER an old joke in political circles there are three centres of power in Washington — the White House, Capitol Hill and the British embassy. The embassy is Britain's largest, one of the busiest in the capital, and issues the most sought-after invitations, especially when members of the royal family are in town.

John Major's first visit to Washington as prime minister has therefore not perturbed the embassy's reputation for magnificence dinners, entertainments and charity events. It allows its senior diplomats to cultivate a range of important American officials and aspiring political leaders.

A garden party last summer for the Princess of Wales was one of the hottest tickets on the social calendar, while a dinner earlier this year for Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, and

Tom King, the defence secretary, was widely regarded as one of the most important gatherings at an embassy during the Bush administration. James Baker, the Secretary of State, Richard Cheney, the defence secretary, and Tom Foley, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, were among the guests.

Critics of the embassy's size have argued that the close relationships between American and British leaders — Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, Dwight Eisenhower and Harold Macmillan — have diminished the role of Britain's diplomats as messengers in an era of direct telephone diplomacy.

Mr Major is scheduled to meet few British diplomats during his stay. The em-

Swings and roundabouts in a special relationship

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

WHEN John Major succeeded Margaret Thatcher, Americans from President Bush down expressed certainty that the "special relationship" would continue unabated.

There is one important difference between Mr Major and Mrs Thatcher. She remembers the second world war. He does not. Whereas he is likely to take a primarily pragmatic view of the relationship, her convictions — and those of her predecessors — were coloured by a romanticism that dated back to 1940.

That was the year Franklin Delano Roosevelt, fighting US opinion firmly opposed to US intervention, came to Britain's aid, acceding to Winston Churchill's desperate request for 50 ageing US destroyers to replace those sunk by German submarines. He circumvented a hostile Congress by "trading" the ships for six British naval bases in the Caribbean. The following year the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the US had no choice but to enter the war on Britain's side, and the special relationship was cemented.

It has had its hiccups since, the most notorious being during the Suez crisis of 1956, when President Eisenhower

demanded that Britain and France withdraw from Egypt and humiliates both. More recently, but less shamingly, the US in 1983 invaded Grenada, a former British colony, despite of British opposition.

The special relationship was surely stronger than when Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan.

One big difference between Mr Major and Mrs Thatcher is she remembers the war. He does not.

Under Mr Major, if the electorate gives him the time, Britain will play a more active role in Europe, and this will be encouraged by the Bush administration, which supports European integration. Four decades of jingo strutting may finally end.

In turning more to Brussels, however, London is unlikely to weaken its links with Washington, which may come to regard Britain as its best hope of ensuring US interests in the new Europe.

The US fears a fortress Europe in which Nato could be eclipsed by a new European defence structure.

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Britain fights EC move to impose huge fishing cuts

From MICHAEL HORNBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT, IN BRUSSELS

BRITAIN was last night fighting to stave off cuts in its fish catch that Brussels wants to impose as part of EC-wide measures to protect dwindling stocks, particularly of cod and haddock in the North Sea.

David Curry, the junior fisheries minister, told a negotiating meeting that Britain was "prepared to move" on some of the European Commission's proposals in return for an increase in the British cod catch in the North Sea.

Officials arriving for the meeting had to pick their way through 15 tonnes of rotting herring and sardines dumped by about 100 angry French trawlers.

The talks, also being attended by John Gummer, the agriculture minister, and Lord Strathclyde, the Scottish fisheries minister, were expected to continue into the early hours of today, with no certain prospect of agreement.

Mr Curry dismissed as "an old-style throw-money-at-it solution" a proposal by the commission to pay fishermen to take their vessels out of service and reduce the size of the EC fleet, which is estimated to be 40 per cent too large for the amount of fish available.

Señor Marin, the European fisheries commissioner, told the ministers, who meet every December to fix catch quotas for the next year, that he wanted stiff measures to allow depleted stocks to recover. These include cuts as high as 61 per cent in some areas and a ban on fishing for cod and haddock in the North Sea and off

the west coast of Scotland for 10 consecutive days each month.

The 10-day ban would apply to all vessels that depended on cod and haddock for more than 40 per cent of their catch in the 18 months to June 30 of this year. Some 400 Scottish and 300 English vessels - about 60 per cent of the British North Sea fleet - would be affected.

British fishermen have been restricted to fishing on 92 days in the past year, a rule that has been widely-ignored and difficult to enforce. Although the 10-day ban would apply to boats from all member states, British fishermen say it would force them to fish harder during the rest of the month and to stay out in unsafe weather.

Señor Marin also wants the mesh size of the nets used in the North Sea to be increased to safeguard juvenile cod and haddock.



Catch phrase: protesting French trawlers amid the fish they dumped with a banner saying 'the young drowned in Brussels'

Parcel blast at home of postman

Madrid - Police arrested a postman here after his wife was injured by a letter-bomb which he had failed to deliver to its addressee (Harry Debelius writes).

Police said that Miguel Rivas García told them the package which exploded in his flat on Monday was one of at least two parcels which he took home instead of delivering. One, which looked like a book, blew up as it was being opened. The postman is in custody suspected of mail robbery, while police are trying to find both the addressee and the sender of the explosive device.

RAF case charge

Bonn - Susanne Becker, a former guerrilla of the far-left Red Army Faction, has been charged with the murder of a top German banker, Jürgen Ponto, in 1977, and trying to kill General Alexander Haig, then European commander of Nato. Frau Becker, aged 39, is one of eight former RAF members arrested in what was East Germany in June. (Reuters)

Sterilisation ruling

Auckland - A New Zealand high court judge has given permission for surgeons to sterilise a severely mentally handicapped teenager. The girl, known only as X in the precedent-setting court case, turned 15 on Wednesday. Local health authorities had refused to carry out the operation and her parents applied for consent. (APF)

Bankers accused

Lusaka - Several employees of Zambia's central bank have been arrested on charges of embezzling 13 million kwacha (£160,000), the country's parliamentary speaker said. Fwanyanya Mulukita was quoted as saying the theft at the Bank of Zambia was disclosed by a parliamentary committee of inquiry. He did not give details. (Reuters)

Drugs round-up

Kuala Lumpur - Malaysian police claim to have smashed four international drug syndicates in the northern state of Penang this month, making 39 arrests and seizing 36 lbs of heroin and 118 lbs of cannabis. Police chief Haniff Orms said the syndicates sold drugs both locally and overseas, especially in Singapore, Australia and Europe. (Reuters)

EC attack claim

Athens - The radical organization "November 17" claimed the responsibility for a spectacular rocket attack on the European Community offices in Athens on Sunday in which two passers-by were injured. The group claimed that the EC had imposed a harsh austerity programme on Greece.

Brothel return

Reno, Nevada - Only a month after federal tax collectors auctioned his Nevada brothel, known as the Mustang Ranch, Joe Conforte, the former owner, threw open its doors again, as its manager. The Internal Revenue Service had seized the brothel against a tax claim and sold it. The buyer, a local lawyer, appointed Mr Conforte as manager. (Reuters)



Europe's trade blocs clear path to unity

From MICHAEL BINYON IN BRUSSELS

THE European Community and seven Nordic and Alpine countries cleared the way yesterday for the creation of a 19-nation trading bloc of 380 million people, to take effect on January 1, 1993.

During talks here between the EC and ministers of the European Free Trade Association (Efta), a breakthrough was made on issues that had threatened to prevent a European Economic Area (EEA) being formed.

The EEA, extending the benefits of the community's single market to Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, is seen here as a vital political and economic bridge between the EC and its main trading partners that could pave the way for most of them to join the community. Both sides aim to sign an agreement before next summer, allowing 18 months for ratification.

Cianchi De Michelis, the Italian foreign minister and president of the European Council, said yes-

terday that the two sides had taken a decisive step forward in negotiations that had become bogged down in arguments over power-sharing.

The community had refused to allow Efta a seat at any EC decision-making table, but was willing to hold prior discussions on issues affecting both sides. Efta was unwilling to drop its demands for many exceptions to EC law unless it was satisfied that arrangements for "decision-shaping" would give it enough say over community regulations by which it would be bound.

Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, the Swiss chief negotiator for Efta, said there was now broad agreement on structures to give each side autonomy in decision-making. He said there should be equal opportunities for experts from both Efta and the community to influence decisions relevant to the EEA. Important details had to be worked out in the next six months. The breakthrough may slow the

rush of Efta applications for full EC membership. Austria has already asked to join and Sweden recently announced it would do so. Finland and Norway are vigorously debating membership.

Brussels has long insisted that no new members could be considered before 1993, though several EC member states say this is too far off. Mr Delamuraz said it was up to each Efta country to decide whether to apply for EC membership. His priority was a good EEA.

Yesterday's breakthrough, exactly a year after talks began, prevented the collapse of negotiations and came as a relief to both sides. Many here see Efta as a useful half-way house that could also be used by the new East European democracies that want to join the community.

In the new EEA, all Efta countries will be bound by most EC law, about 1,400 legal acts, excluding the common agricultural policy, which form a

common legal base for the free movement of goods, services, capital and people.

One of the thorniest issues has been competition policy, and Efta has committed itself to setting up an independent structure to apply competition rules, with powers and functions similar to those of the European Commission. Negotiators have to work out how the two bodies should co-operate.

Efta has also been worried that joint standards on the environment, health and safety might lead to a relaxation of the much higher standards that prevail in the Efta countries. Ministers yesterday announced that their negotiations would look for solutions as each case arose.

Fishing policy has also been tricky to negotiate, especially for Iceland whose economy is overwhelmingly dependent on fish. Switzerland has balked at allowing free movement of labour, fearing it would be flooded with immigrants and property buyers.

'Embassy bomber' arrested

From GAVIN BELL
IN JOHANNESBURG

A JUNIOR official at the South African department of foreign affairs has been arrested in connection with a bomb attack at the American ambassador's residence in Pretoria in October. Police said he was one of three suspects detained under the internal security act.

The home-made bomb, fastened to a gate at the rear of the compound, caused considerable damage but no casualties. The adjacent residence of the British ambassador, Sir Robin Renwick, was not damaged during the attack.

A local news magazine identified the official as P.J. Kruger, who had been working in the foreign aid section since August, and said he had right-wing connections. A department spokesman said: "The law must take its course. We have no further comment."

R. F. "Pik" Botha, the minister of foreign affairs, condemned the attack at the time and asked police to step up security at foreign missions.

An Afrikaner paramilitary organisation recently claimed responsibility for a similar attack on the British embassy last February when shots were fired through windows. Slogans were also daubed on walls. The organisation accused Britain of meddling in South African affairs by pressing for the release of Nelson Mandela, the deputy president of the African National Congress.

Hurd calls for review of ban on Pretoria

By MICHAEL KNIFE
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

THE Commonwealth would have to reconsider its policy of sporting sanctions against South Africa in the light of the progress being made towards the dismantling of apartheid, Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, said yesterday.

Different sports were at different stages of integration but progress had been made, Mr Hurd said while answering questions from the Commons select committee on foreign affairs, which was winding up a series of hearings on the changes in southern Africa.

Commonwealth policy towards sporting links with South Africa is laid down in the Gleneagles agreement, named after the venue of the Commonwealth conference at which it was framed. Although Britain acted alone last February in lifting sanctions on investment in South Africa, Mr Hurd made it clear that Britain would not act unilaterally to break the Gleneagles agreement.

The European Community's decision at the Rome summit last weekend to lift sanctions on investment in South Africa was questioned by James Lester (Labour), who asked whether the EC should not have heeded a call by the African National Congress (ANC) to wait longer.

Mr Hurd said there had been two schools of thought, with one wishing to wait for South Africa to enact specific legislation against apartheid. But the majority, which included Britain, believed it was time to promote the peace process by encouraging investment.

The decision, Mr Hurd said, was "very satisfactory and entirely in the logic of what we have been arguing". Investment would follow economic appraisal rather than political acts, he said, but sanctions on investment had weighed heavily on South African business and the international community could not wait until apartheid had been swept away before lifting them.

Now was the time to get on with economic development and there was clearly a body of opinion within the ANC that understood that and was arguing for it, Mr Hurd said. The ban on investment had been more than a gesture and he had a long list of European firms that were considering investing in South Africa.

Britain believed in a step-by-step approach, he said. The South African government had taken a series of steps that had not been matched by the EC until the weekend decision. Mr Hurd emphasised that sanctions were being eased, not lifted, and others such as the sanctions on South African iron, steel and gold should remain until Pretoria had repealed significant apartheid legislation such as the Group Areas Act and the Land Act.

He said he felt there was a reasonable chance of a negotiated solution to South Africa's problems. The violence was the main impediment to progress and political leaders were responsible for leading their supporters away from violence. Both the government and the ANC had problems with their grass-roots support. It was Mr Hurd's impression that the government was not anxious for any break in the discussions with the ANC and was looking for ways through the obstacles.

Asked how he thought Nelson Mandela, the ANC's deputy leader, viewed the need to encourage investment, Mr Hurd said he had gained the strong impression that the ANC was "very conscious of the way the wind was blowing" and was not going to build a post-apartheid South Africa on discredited ideas.

The ANC realised that it had a lot to learn about political processes but wanted to learn and was doing so fast, Mr Hurd said. The same applied to Inkatha, the rival, predominantly Zulu and more conservative grouping.

Mrs Lynda Chalker, the minister for overseas development, told the committee that Britain was providing modest aid to the ANC and other movements that had previously been excluded from the political process.

Gain for Bogotá in drugs war

From ANNA ARAMA IN BOGOTÁ

THE surrender of leading drug trafficker Fabio Ochoa, a member of the Medellin drug cartel wanted for extradition to the United States, gave President Gaviria the first positive results of a new policy that is expected to end violent confrontations with the United States.

Lawyers working for the Medellin cartel drafted a series of counter-proposals and took hostages to force the government to forge ahead with new offers.

Although Dr Gaviria has said he is not being pressured by the traffickers holding hostages, the government and the Medellin cartel have continued communication that presidential sources refuse to describe as negotiations.

On Monday Dr Gaviria issued a new decree that extended the points in the September proposal.

The decree explicitly renounced

extradition when a trafficker surrendered and confessed. Dr Gaviria expects that the surrender of leading traffickers would eclipse any opposition to his new policy in Colombia and in the United States. Senior Ochoa's surrender is the cartel's test case of the policy.

Senior Ochoa, aged 33, is the brother of Pablo Escobar, the chief of the Medellin cartel. All are wanted for extradition to the United States. Senior Ochoa is named in two federal court indictments in the United States and is implicated in the killing of police informant Barry Seal, who was murdered in 1986. Colombian courts will ask the United States to submit information on all pending cases against Senior Ochoa. The Colombian courts will then have one year to decide on his fate.

In the aftermath of last week's riots, Albanian radio reported that 42 people were on trial in the coastal town of Durres, 55 in the central industrial city of Elbasan and 60 in the northern town of Shkoder. The radio said they were accused of "threatening the lives and health of people, illegal conduct in public, assault on representatives of state power and illegal gatherings".

However much Mr Alia is hoping that the relatively tame Democratic Party will damp down Albania's pent-up frustrations after decades of misrule, it remains to be seen whether the Albanian people will tolerate anything less than swift change.

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Christopher Columbus - the Motion Picture.

They are now closely watching reaction to a medieval tale which opened this week: *Hamlet* by Franco Zeffirelli. The money men hope the vision of Mel Gibson, he of *Mad Max* and *Lethal Weapon*, inights will overcome the notorious Shakespeare factor, particularly in translation for the Far East market.

If it works, anything could happen - Schwarzenegger as Macbeth or Stallone as Lear.

Next in line, heralded by an overture of lawsuits, comes the Columbus craze. This began when Christopher Columbus Productions, a Netherlands-based company, hired the producers of *Superman* and went to register five possible titles, starting with the obvious *Christopher Columbus* and running through *Christopher Columbus - The Movie* all the way to *Christopher Columbus - The Motion Picture*.

They lawyers have once again

taken the stage in the Broadway production of

Miss Saigon. Only three months

after settling a bitter quarrel with

the union that he had seen 1,200

Asian actresses in auditions around the United States but none had the ability of Miss Salonga, aged 19. He is also arguing that the acclaim she has won in London qualifies her as a genuine star.

Mr Mackintosh now wants to bring Lea Salonga, the Filipina

actress who stars in London, to play her role as the Vietnamese

prostitute in New York when the show opens in April.

Under Equity rules, an actor

may only be imported if he or she

enjoys the status of an interna-

tional star or has ability which

cannot be found locally. The

Alien Committee of Equity has rejected Miss Salonga on both counts.

Last summer the committee

MICHAEL KNIFE
CORRESPONDENT
in New Zealand
The welfare state since 1946.
Cries of protest greeted Ms Ruth Richardson, the finance minister, when she announced to parliament that she was also pruning benefits for the unemployed and for single parents by between NZ\$14 and NZ\$27 a week from April. Benefits for the elderly were frozen. Visits to the doctor will become more costly and prescription charges will cost up to NZ\$15 for adults.

The government also introduced the most widespread labour reforms since 1894, disposing of old industrial practices, freeing the labour market and removing union monopolies.

The most radical of the welfare changes was the abolition of the family benefit payment of NZ\$6 (£1.84) a week for each child, an icon of the welfare state since 1946.

Cries of protest greeted Ms Ruth Richardson, the finance minister, when she announced to parliament that she was also pruning benefits for the unemployed and for single parents by between NZ\$14 and NZ\$27 a week from April. Benefits for the elderly were frozen. Visits to the doctor will become more costly and prescription charges will cost up to NZ\$15 for adults.

The package, dubbed a mini budget, came 53 days after the National party, which pledged to redesign the welfare state, ousted Labour in the general election.

The social welfare department paid benefits and pensions to 1.25 million New Zealanders last year, when less than 1.5 million people were in full time work. The country has a population of about 3.2 million.

The benefit for single parents has increased by 70 per cent in five years, with equivalent increases for those receiving sickness benefits. Indeed, critics say that New Zealand is becoming a nation of single parents, the ill, the unemployed and the aged.

The prime minister, Jim Bolger, pointing to New Zealand's stomp to 19th in the table of the 24 countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), said the country had to stop spending money it did not have. He said that the government's package contained harsh measures geared towards reviving the economy as soon as possible.

Mike Moore, opposition leader, said the measures went against the family, women, the powerless and the weak. Helen Clark, deputy opposition leader, said: "This is a black Wednesday that will go down as the day that the National party ended the welfare state."

Ms Richardson, however, said that the burden of state spending had sapped the country's energy. The welfare state had to be redesigned to reduce government spending and to benefit those in genuine need. The great margin between benefit rates and earnings would encourage a move from state dependency into employment.

Ms Richardson ruled out tax increases for the wealthy, saying this would further depress the economy. She said that the top third of earners could afford to pay for health and education and should expect to do so.

The economic pruning will take NZ\$245 million off social welfare spending for the year to next June and NZ\$1.27 billion off spending for the following year. Ms Richardson said the projected budget deficit of NZ\$3 billion for 1993-94 had been halved and she aimed to balance the budget completely by that year.

New Zealand mini budget lays axe to welfare state

From RICHARD LONG IN WELLINGTON

NEW Zealand's new National party government carved into the sacred cows of the welfare state yesterday, abolishing some benefits, cutting others and greatly reducing the budget deficit in an attempt to generate investment, growth and jobs.

The government also introduced the most widespread labour reforms since 1894, disposing of old industrial practices, freeing the labour market and removing union monopolies.

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Cries of protest greeted Ms Ruth Richardson, the finance minister, when she announced to parliament that she was also pruning benefits for the unemployed and for single parents by between NZ\$14 and NZ\$27 a week from April. Benefits for the elderly were frozen. Visits to the doctor will become more costly and prescription charges will cost up to NZ\$15 for adults.

The package, dubbed a mini budget, came 53 days after the National party, which pledged to redesign the welfare state, ousted Labour in the general election.

The social welfare department paid benefits and pensions to 1.25 million New Zealanders last year, when less than 1.5 million people were in full time work. The country has a population of about 3.2 million.

The benefit for single parents has increased by 70 per cent in five years, with equivalent increases for those receiving sickness benefits. Indeed, critics say that New Zealand is becoming a nation of single parents, the ill, the unemployed and the aged.

The prime minister, Jim Bolger, pointing to New Zealand's stomp to 19th in the table of the 24 countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), said the country had to stop spending money it did not have. He said that the government's package contained harsh measures geared towards reviving the economy as soon as possible.

Mike Moore, opposition leader, said the measures went against the family, women, the powerless and the weak. Helen Clark, deputy opposition leader, said: "This is a black Wednesday that will go down as the day that the National party ended the welfare state."

Ms Richardson, however, said that the burden of state spending had sapped the country's energy. The welfare state had to be redesigned to reduce government spending and to benefit those in genuine need. The great margin between benefit rates and earnings would encourage a move from state dependency into employment.

Ms Richardson ruled out tax increases for the wealthy, saying this would further depress the economy. She said that the top third of earners could afford to pay for health and education and should expect to do so.

The economic pruning will take NZ\$245 million off social welfare spending for the year to next June and NZ\$1.27 billion off spending for the following year. Ms Richardson said the projected budget deficit of NZ\$3 billion for 1993-94 had been halved and she aimed to balance the budget completely by that year.

Mr Schifter met Tian Zengpei, the deputy foreign minister, and talked with officials from the police, the legal department, the family planning commission and the minority nationality commission about subjects as diverse as the one-child policy and freedom of expression in Tibet. He handed over a list naming 150 political prisoners whose release he requested.

Shanghai relives capitalist dream

From CATHERINE SAMPSON IN PEKING

REFORMERS' dreams of a Chinese Wall Street drew a little nearer yesterday as the old capitalist enclave of Shanghai opened its controversial new stock exchange.

Until now, stock and bond deals have been conducted in local exchange centres stuck in the "iron age" of trading, where prices are chalked on blackboards and computers and the unified pricing system are the stuff of fantasy. Shanghai's move into the 20th century is just one cautious reformist attempt to breathe life into China's shaky stock and bond market.

Two weeks ago Shenzhen, the special economic zone neighbouring Hong Kong, quietly opened its own unified exchange, creeping in ahead of Shanghai, which had aimed to be first.

Last week in Peking, a nationwide system was established for trading. But doubt about the political rights and wrongs of shareholding have kept these capitalist institutions in a straitjacket. On the Peking system, only bonds can be traded.

In Shenzhen, only five companies have issued shares, while in Shanghai seven have done so. Figures published by the official news agency reveal that of the total trading



Rebel link-up: Sein Win, centre, with the Karen guerrilla leaders Bo Mya, right, and Brang Seng, after forming their own provisional government

Dissidents set up rival Burmese government

From ASSOCIATED PRESS IN BANGKOK

A GROUP of Burmese dissidents, sidelined by the military government which has ignored an electoral mandate for democracy, has declared a rival government. Headed by Sein Win, cousin of Burma's detained opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, the group announced an eight-member cabinet at Manerplaw, headquarters of the Karen National Union.

All eight men won parliamentary seats in the general election on May 27. Miss Suu Kyi's National League

for Democracy won the election by a landslide, but the government has refused to accept its victory.

Mr Sein Win was named prime minister of the "National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma". He said that forming the body "was the only option for us to choose because this military junta has no will and no way to transfer power to the people". "Burma has become a country shrouded by darkness because of all the unlawful arrests, tortures and persecutions and human rights violations," a declaration by the alternative government said. Copies were released in Bangkok yesterday. It said

the government stood for the immediate elimination of the military government, a national convention including members of parliament and insurgent groups, and the establishment of a genuine democratic government to create "an independent, prosperous and modernised Federal Union of Burma".

The other cabinet members are Peter Lin Pin, Win Ko, Than Kywe, Hla Pe, Thein Oo, Hla Tin and Tun Oo. Mr Sein Win is a member of the National Democracy Party and Mr Lin Pin was an independent candidate in the election. The others are members of the National League for

Democracy. All fled the threat of arrest in Burma after their plans for a rival government became known.

The Democratic Alliance of Burma, an umbrella organisation of 21 rebel groups, supported the declaration. The Karen union is a member of the alliance, which is based at Manerplaw on the frontier with Thailand. A member of the Rangoon government said in an newspaper interview on Tuesday that setting up the rival government "would be a great mistake". Western diplomats have said it would be unlikely that any country would actually recognise the parallel government.

EC cash lure for the boat people

From PETER GUILFORD IN BRUSSELS

THE European Commission is launching an £87 million repatriation programme for 80,000 Vietnamese boat people who failed to qualify as political refugees. The move is meant to ease the burden on Hong Kong and Southeast Asian countries, but officials admit Brussels is also concerned that Hanoi may not be able or willing to take the migrants back into society.

Described in a statement as "a social and economic incentive" for boat people to return home, the commission's aid package will help cover transport and reintegration costs. It will apply only to those "economic migrants" who return to Vietnam voluntarily and will run for up to three years from 1991.

The package will cover direct grants to the exiles as well as channelling money into their communities in order to improve jobs, health care and infrastructure.

This decision follows rigorous screening by the United Nations, which concluded that of 120,000 refugees in Hong Kong and elsewhere, some 80,000 have escaped in search of a better standard of living and not because of persecution. The plan still needs the approval of EC member governments.

It may come as a relief to the British government, which has drawn disapproval from the United States and others for insisting on repatriation to deal with Vietnamese arriving in Hong Kong.

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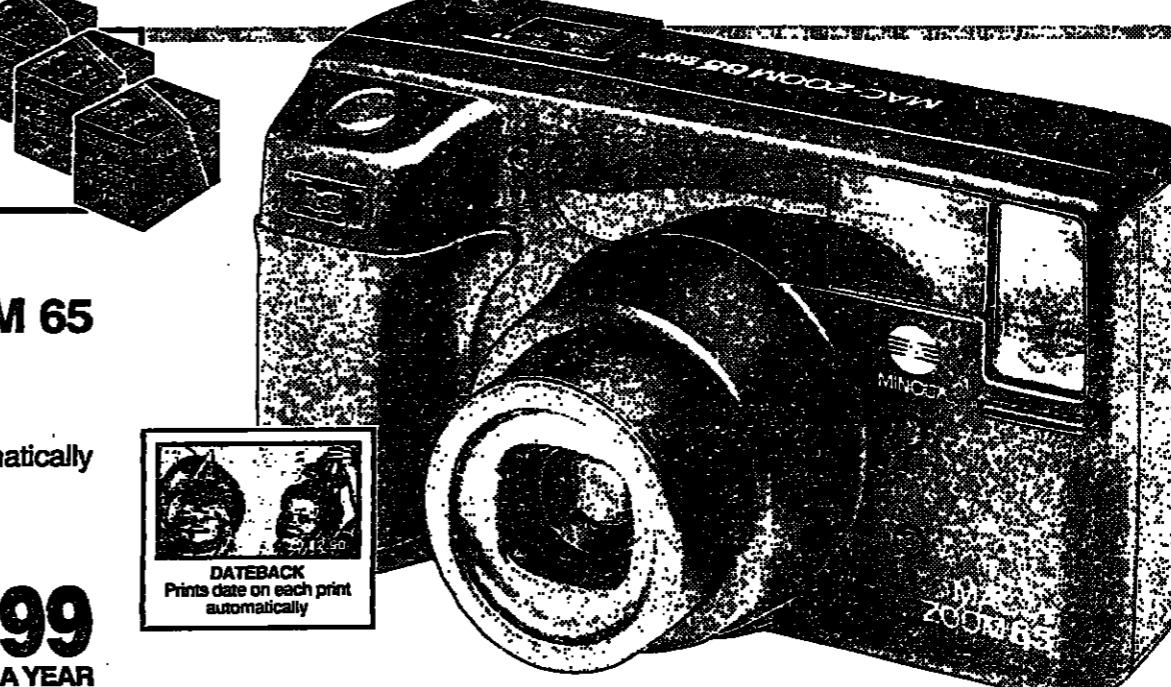
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Crime: not just a family affair

Roger Graef

Christmas came early to the Home Office this year. Ministers had the satisfaction of seeing one of their political messages striking home, literally. When asked "Who is responsible for reducing crime?", 53 per cent of the public named parents and the family, only 23 per cent said the police, and only 14 per cent the government. Coming this week when the quarterly crime figures showed yet another rise in car thefts and other "avoidable crime", this seems to suggest that the government's message that reducing crime is everybody's business is getting through.

The figures, however, are a poor indication of the real state of affairs. The police recorded four million crimes last year. The British Crime Survey estimates that a further eight million were committed against individuals and households but not reported. This omits company crime, a huge uncharted area, and so-called "victimless" crimes such as drugs and prostitution, which are recorded only by arrests.

This means that the criminal justice system deals with only a tiny proportion of crimes and criminals, and is virtually useless as a deterrent. But it also means we have lived more or less peacefully with a far larger number of crimes than we realised.

It is time we kicked the habit of whipping ourselves into a father of anxiety every time the crime figures appear. They do not tell us anything useful. Clear-ups, for example, refer to arrests, not convictions, and therefore are no measure of police efficiency in keeping criminals off the streets. The media dwell on crimes of violence, which comprise only 6 per cent of the total of recorded crime. Indeed we may well be reading the figures upside down: in certain categories the rise in reported crime reflects greater confidence in the police, while the fall in others could mean that victims despair of the police taking any action.

Politicians want "the family" to prevent crime and replace the destructive nannying of the welfare state. But their model of the family is drawn from their own experience, rather than the bleak reality known to the more serious young offenders. They may have no family life, or it may be a far cry from the happy heart-side scenes most of us will enjoy next week. Most young offenders come from broken homes, poor housing with one or both parents among the long-term unemployed. They have the highest incidence of domestic violence, alcoholism and child abuse. Many teenage offenders already have children of their own.

The government also seems unaware of the impact of its social policies on the families who "shirk their duties". Standing on your own two feet takes on a different meaning if you are queuing for a

...and moreover

CLEMENT FREUD

The message "Your invitation to win a Cellarmaster's cottage" was printed in capital letters on an entry form attached to the neck of the bottle of Remy Martin VSOP brandy sent to me by a well-wisher. There was a picture of a part of the cottage: on two floors, shuttered windows, front lawn, trees at the side and rear, mountains in the background. Makes you want to be a cellarmaster when you grow up.

"The illustration shown is not the actual cottage," it states in the competition rules. I wonder why? I wonder what they said to the artist when they commissioned him: "Do a pic of something that is not an actual cellarmaster's cottage"? Could it be that they are giving away a genuine cellarmaster's cottage that is tied to a factory, noisy, smelly, poky? Surely not.

To win this "cottage of your dreams" — I quote from the entry form — "you have to emulate the cellarmaster's art of blending cognacs using his sense of sight, smell, taste and touch... The cellarmaster will pick up a distinct aroma at each of three different stages; you are invited to try to match the aromas which the cellarmaster identifies at each stage." There is a picture of a man sniffing at a shiny glass containing something. The glass and the nose are about the same size. Perhaps this is not the actual cellarmaster, nor his glass, nor his nose.

Alternatively, you can buy 216 bottles of Remy VSOP for £5,000, wait until the March budget when Remy goes up as brandy duty rises in our truly classless society, sell the stuff and be in line for a second home: north of the classy Dordogne, east of the pleasant beaches of La Rochelle, only four hours' drive from Paris and within two hours of Bordeaux airport.

My advice would be to perm the selected three from each, and for 27 bottles that you can give away or sell you have an almost equally good chance of victory. I am watching the panel; if the answer to one is petals — a predominant smell of petals from six inches — I shall have something to say to them, provided we get to find out who they are. Regrettably, the artist did not sketch a picture, not even of people not on the actual panel.

Peter Stothard, US editor, sets the agenda for the Bush-Major talks this weekend

Hard facts for the special relation

A little over a year ago, when John Major sat down for the first time with George Bush to survey the international landscape, the sight was almost wholly pleasurable. Communism was collapsing with virtually no loss of blood. The president was basking in esteem, and for the newly appointed British foreign secretary, it seemed there could be "no better time to be involved in foreign policy".

After his talks in the Oval Office and his participation in the cosy Bush ritual of refusing press questions at photo-opportunities, Mr Major felt confident enough to flaunt his inexperience. "It has enabled me to come to foreign affairs with a wholly fresh eye," he said, "and what has impressed me most can be summed up in three words: excitement, movement, opportunity."

Some observers thought Mr Major's wide-eyed optimism charming; others considered it close to jaunty. But the scene at the White House last September starred two men who, frankly, could not believe their luck. The pictures next day were almost a caricature of the special relationship.

Their talks in Washington this

weekend may not be such fun. After four months pursuing Saddam Hussein, Mr Bush is a grimmer man. Even in a culture that loves working far into the night, his haggard looks have drawn attention. As one only averagely workaholic aide put it this week, the president looks as though he has just spent three months in a human shield. Certainly, the returning hostages look in far better shape.

Mr Major will be made starkly aware at their meeting of the likelihood of war. It is one thing to be told about it by diplomats, foreign affairs advisers and generals. It is quite another to discuss details of operations and casualties with the man who within a month may set the guns rolling.

The American administration is on a war footing palpable to everyone who comes close to its heart. Operational secrecy is at a premium. The days of battle-plans being blazoned over the news magazines are over. With briefings even to allied ambassadors restricted to only the most general military topics, the visit of the prime minister is a serious chance to discuss critical issues.

There will not yet be war-plans

and coloured maps on the Camp David tables. The president has proved to be a better delegator than the Pentagon had feared, and so far he does not appear to be breathing down the necks of his generals. Nevertheless, a number of awkward security problems may be raised. Both Britain and America are alarmed, for example, at the terrorist threat that Iraq could pose to civil aircraft as the UN deadline nears. Officials of the two countries have held meetings to discuss counter-measures.

The US has become increasingly irritated by what are seen as excessive German proposals for protecting its interests in the mid-life of January with highly visible military force. Bonn wants advance warning of American action in the Gulf in order to protect its flights further, a request that Britain and America resent but must treat with respect.

Mr Bush may also want to discuss the means of responding to Saddam Hussein's biological weapons — an issue in which, according to defence department sources, he has taken a special interest. The coalition has inadequate supplies of serum against anthrax, which is said to be the

gravest threat posed by Iraq. Following problems at the State University of Michigan, where US serum production is centred, Britain has the biggest stocks, and there is a sensitive question of how they should be deployed and to whom.

Details like these, on top of an overall discussion of the stalled diplomatic moves and regional reconstruction necessary when Saddam has been removed from Kuwait, will not make for an agenda of good cheer. Possibly, as both sides accept, the British forces in the Gulf may have to be increased further. It is for Mr Major to map the limits of what commitment is acceptable to British public opinion, and to brief the president accordingly.

Mr Major may not provide quite the tonic that Mr Bush could have used right now from Mrs Thatcher. He lacks the experience, the skill with words and the ability to inspire confidence from a long-held position of power. But some of the president's advisers think that the quieter the weekend, the better it will be. If Mr Major can enliven the gloom with a shaft or two of humour, that will be a new development on a British prime ministerial visit — and a welcome surprise before what looks like being a rather black Christmas in Washington.

Give us a chance to match this mud-slinger's charter

Last week, a substantial number of people connected with West Wiltshire shire council were arrested; they included members and former members of its staff, many of whom hold, or have held, leading positions in the council. The names of some were revealed, but no details of any charges. Those are the bare facts; no doubt if some or all of those arrested are tried, we shall learn more.

Now what would you say if I announced on this page that they were all guilty? Of course I could not do so; both the editor of *The Times* and I would be held in contempt of court and probably imprisoned. But ignore that and suppose I had done such a thing. What would you think of me?

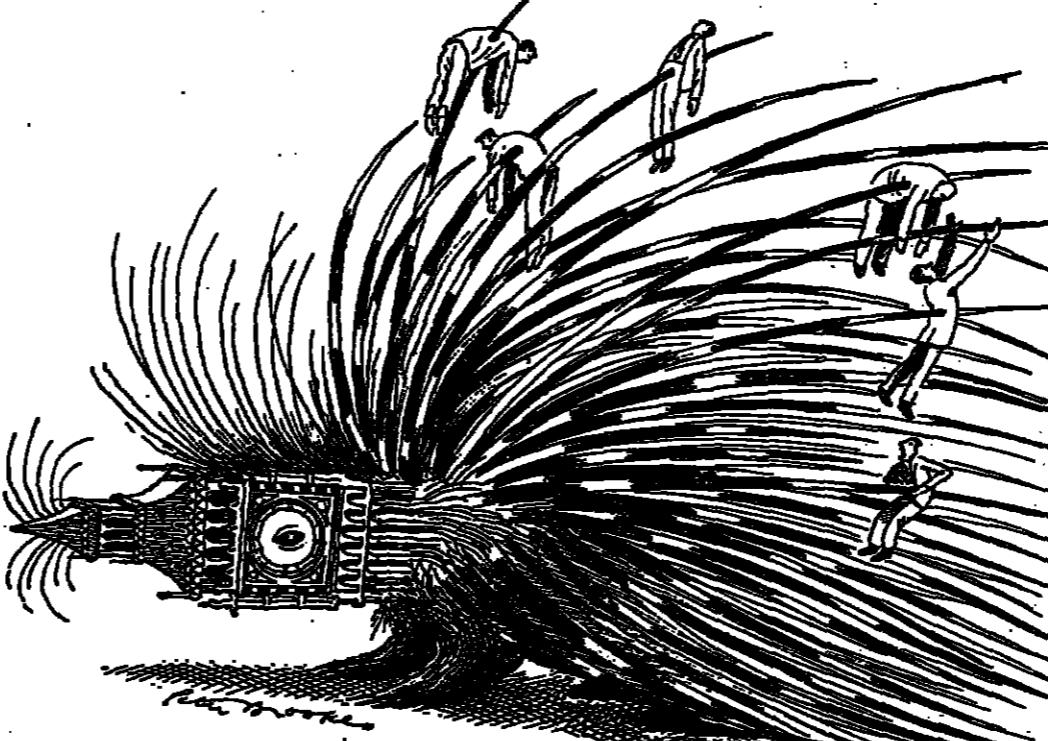
You would think very little of me, and I would find it hard to disagree. Yet I tell you that what I have described has just come to pass, in a form almost exactly parallel to the macabre scenario I invented, and no judge will — no judge can — fall upon those who have flouted one of the most precious and vital of all our laws.

Who has done this, and how can the courts fail to take appropriate action? Where is there so remarkable an immunity that it entirely escapes any possible retribution?

The answer, of course, is the immunity to be found in Parliament, where it goes by the name of parliamentary privilege, and in all my days I have never seen the like of the use just made of it.

A few days after — after, note, not before — the Wiltshire arrests, two Labour MPs, Stuart Randall (Hull West) and David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside), put down what is called an early day motion. In it, they declared that six Conservative members of West Wiltshire council, whom they named, had corruptly acted in concert to subvert council procedures for the benefit of their party.

Because any MP can safely accuse any individual of the most flagitious behaviour, provided no charges are pending, such individuals have no legal or parliamentary redress. Randall and Blunkett, therefore, were able to make these serious allegations in the full knowledge that there could be no retribution. If you think of this tale as a tiger-hunt, the tiger is tethered by privilege, and can be shot in perfect safety. The use of the early day motion by the two Grand Inquisitors is significant, such a parliamentary device is not



Bernard Levin puts forward a quid pro quo that would make MPs wary of invoking parliamentary privilege

dicial comment on criminal proceedings, but such comment is normally ruled out of order at once, and even that hapless, helpless Speaker would not permit an MP to denounce as a criminal a person who is on bail.

But it is different for men and women who — and this applies to all the six councillors — have not been prosecuted or indeed even suspended from their positions.

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seriously expected (even by those who put it down) to be debated; it is a way of making a public statement, and indeed could be thought of as an alternative to writing to a newspaper.

But that choice, of course, was not open to them. If outside the House of Commons, they had published their accusations against the six councillors (who, I remind you, have not been arrested), they could have faced the laws of libel or slander. By the use of their privilege they were able to avoid venturing into an arena where accuser and accused are on more even terms.

The use of parliamentary privilege to make accusations that would be impossible "outside" has grown, is growing and ought to be diminished, Mr Dale Campbell-Savours, MP, must hold the record of such in-house denunciations. Yet I am surprised at the ready and widespread acceptance in the practice in general, on

all sides; even when a particularly sweeping use of the privilege custom is criticised, nobody seems disposed to attack the entire system. Well, I am so disposed, and I shall now do a bit of vigorous disposing. (I say, wouldn't it be funny if they handed me up to the bar of the House for infringing *their* privilege?)

Why, exactly, are MPs granted this extraordinary licence — a licence to denounce anyone (other than, of course, other members of the House) without being obliged to offer even the most vague and sketchy evidence, or indeed to say why they are defaming their victim? The reply always takes the form of a suspiciously pompous claim that they must be entirely untrammeled in the pursuit of the wicked. Unfortunately for this claim, it can be tested, and I have spent many years in the testing: early in my career I used to be a parliamentary reporter, and I there conceived a dislike of the

MPs' privilege, which I have since come to regard as a particularly unnecessary and undesirable custom.

But perhaps there is a compromise. At present, an MP speaking in the House can with impunity defame anyone outside it. How about an Act of Parliament by the terms of which we would have the privilege of saying anything we like about anything MPs say in the House, with the MPs forbidden to take libel or slander actions against us? What do you say, Hon. Members?

Apart, of course, that I am a forger, a confidence trickster, an oppressor of widows and children, a pornographer and a horse-thief.

letter to myself?" he says. Baldry short-circuited the system and sent the information directly to the manager of a Bradford factory worried about the proposed changes in pollution control.

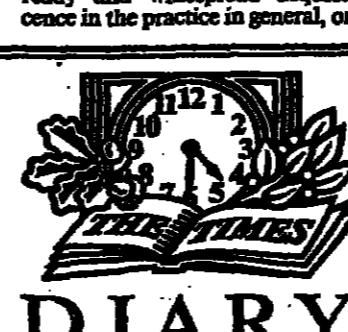
Second string

Paul Tortelier, who died earlier this week, made one of his last appearances in Britain in April when he played a composition of his own at a memorial service for the broadcaster Josephine Whitehorn at All Soul's, Langham Place. They met by chance in Regent's Park in the 1970s. Recognising him as a famous cellist, Whitehorn excitedly bounded up and said: "I think you must be Señor Pablo Casals." "Actually I'm Tortelier," was her reply. Despite the mistake, an enduring friendship blossomed.

Lunching out

The Sultan of Brunei's £100 million refurbishment of the Dorchester Hotel has failed to impress one of the hotel's most loyal erstwhile customers, Christina Foyle. For nearly 50 years, the doyenne of bookshop owners used the Dorchester for her celebrated literary jamboree. But when the Dorchester closed two years ago for its comprehensive overhaul, she moved the lunches further up Park Lane to Lord Forte's flagship, the Grosvenor House Hotel.

Although the Dorchester is open for business again, Miss Foyle is in no hurry to move. "We were happy there, but the food at the Grosvenor House is very good, and people like it. I think we shall stay where we are."



liaison with Mr Levitt is a matter for discussion."

Meanwhile, the college continues to emboss the logo of another sponsor, KPMG, across its rowers' tracksuits. All rather embarrassing, really, for KPMG are the financial administrators now liquidating Levitt's assets.

The prospect of Oriel rowers sporting the liquidator's name on their shirts as they row a boat named after Levitt is disheartening for the college's boating fraternity. Such a combination, they fear, would almost certainly sink.

Card sharp

A s parliamentary under-secretary at the Department of Energy, Tony Baldry wrote to David Heathcoat-Amory, his opposite number at Environment, seeking information about pollution controls contained in the Environment Protection Bill. But by the time Heathcoat-Amory's civil servants had drafted a reply, John Major had reshuffled his ministers, swapping the two. One of the first letters to be presented for Baldry's signature, therefore, was the reply to his own query. "I found I was actually writing a

Thatcher's new summit?

Now that she is renting a top-floor flat in Belgravia, Mrs Thatcher may soon be lending her name to another exclusive address, a presently unnamed mountain on South Georgia, the remote island in the south Atlantic. Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society have asked the Foreign Office for permission to name it Thatcher Peak.

"It's a subsidiary summit, 9,500 feet high, a mile and a half northwest of Mount Page, the highest point on the island," says Tom Stacey, novelist and fellow of the society. He noted the mount when he and scientists on a Royal Geographical Society ship stopped at South Georgia at the time of Mrs Thatcher's resignation. "Our hearts were moved when we heard she was going. We felt that some tribute would be appropriate."

Alternatively, you can buy 216 bottles of Remy VSOP for £5,000, wait until the March budget when Remy goes up as brandy duty rises in our truly classless society, sell the stuff and be in line for a second home: north of the classy Dordogne, east of the pleasant beaches of La Rochelle, only four hours' drive from Paris and within two hours of Bordeaux airport.

My advice would be to perm the selected three from each, and for 27 bottles that you can give away or sell you have an almost equally good chance of victory. I am watching the panel; if the answer to one is petals — a predominant smell of petals from six inches — I shall have something to say to them, provided we get to find out who they are. Regrettably, the artist did not sketch a picture, not even of people not on the actual panel.

his honour, and was made an honorary fellow. "We are distressed by what has happened," says a college spokesman. "At this stage we have not met to discuss with Mr Levitt's money or whether we will name a boat after him. The whole future of the

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UNION IN EXTREMIS

Is the Soviet Union finally breaking up? After months of debate over whether to "help" President Gorbachev stop this process, Western governments have finally decided to offer substantial aid. The debate about Mr Gorbachev's role is still not academic; he remains, at least potentially, the man most likely to contain the growing institutional confusion and economic chaos. But the West has declared its solidarity without knowing how far beyond the Kremlin his writ now runs. Mr Gorbachev's threat yesterday to resort to rule by decree was delivered to an auditorium scattered with empty rows, the seats of republican delegates who had walked out of the Congress of People's Deputies.

The most urgent question is not, for the moment at least, whether the Soviet leadership (and people) want a market-based modern consumer society, or even whether the Soviet Union is serious about civilising what might more accurately be called a military economy than a military-industrial complex. The immediate question is whether, with or without external assistance, the Soviet Union can or even should hold together, and on what political and economic conditions.

The heady period of ideological and institutional deconstruction is over. Reconstruction requires not only clear decisions but some certainty that they will be carried out. This week's debates in Moscow on a union treaty to formalise the relationship of the republics with the centre seem curiously out of touch with any reality but one: the breakdown of authority.

There is deadlock between the centre and the republics, most of which have in effect declared economic UDI and are striking their own trade deals and drawing up their own laws. One result is total confusion about who owns what, which laws obtain and where power lies. The union treaty is as essential to these questions as it now seems elusive.

Mr Gorbachev's draft of the treaty is not illiberal, provided the central premise of a single federation is accepted. But that premise is opposed, for different reasons, by the governments of most of the Soviet Union's 15 republics. The Baltic states, whose incorporation into the Union was illegal, refuse to negotiate terms for the independence which is their right. The hitherto docile Central Asian republics want better terms and equality at the

negotiating table. The Georgians and Moldavians, by contrast, seem mainly piqued by the Kremlin's failure to help them repress separatist minorities within their own borders.

President Gorbachev's angry statement yesterday that he was prepared to impose emergency presidential rule in republics where there was "a serious threat to the state" should be read less as a determination to use force than as further evidence that neither he nor those advising him is confident of containing these disparate manifestations of revolt.

Mr Gorbachev has no choice but to emphasise the restoration of order. But he is not going the right way about it. There is little evidence that, if he succeeds in restoring a measure of discipline, he will loosen the centre's bureaucratic chains, freeing local governments and entrepreneurs. Markets do require legal frameworks and efficient police forces to function. But they also require a government capable of distinguishing between organised crime and protection rackets, and the normal quest for profit – all of which are lumped together in the leadership's denunciations of "mafia" practices. And they require extensive devolution of power.

Mr Gorbachev is still in defiance of what is happening across the country, banking on a restoration of central authority. For the rest, he equivocates. His statements on such key questions as private property grow more, not less, delphic in their ambiguity. During a break in this week's tumultuous proceedings of the Congress of People's Deputies, a reporter asked Mr Gorbachev whether it was fair to say that he was moving to the right. "Actually", he replied, "I'm going around in circles."

Officially to keep alive such prevarication cannot be in the West's interest. If mere anarchy is not to be loosed on the Soviet world (at the peril of the world outside) Mr Gorbachev must be persuaded that in its present form, "the centre cannot hold". The aid now promised should provide formidable leverage, using the prescriptions in the just-completed report on the Soviet economy by the International Monetary Fund as a point of reference. The West cannot impose political decisions on the Kremlin. But it can emphasise the connections between political devolution and market freedoms, and tie its assistance to an orderly loosening of the Union.

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF

Police-recorded crime statistics, reaching another "record high" to the hysteria of the law and order lobby yesterday, are a totally unreliable indicator of criminal behaviour. They are a function of police activity, the inclination to report burglaries, insurance practice and car ownership. As such, the level of crime reported to police stations bears little relationship to the actual incidence of crime, or to its rise or fall. Yet the Home Office still pushes these figures out every quarter.

The media then adds its own hyperbole. The BBC yesterday stated that "crime rose last year by 14 per cent", with no qualifying source and in direct contradiction of the more reliable Home Office annual crime survey. The Opposition home affairs spokesman, Roy Hattersley, initially blames the figures on the government and implies that more money for the police would help, which he cannot really believe.

The police, the Home Office and Mr Hattersley are all party to a conspiracy to imply that Britain is in the grip of a "crime wave". They merely aggravate the real evil, which is not crime itself but a fear on the part of the public, especially its more vulnerable members, that crime is about to overwhelm their daily lives. There is no evidence for this from surveys of public experience of crime, which at worst show a modest long-term rise roughly commensurate with increasing wealth. The quarterly reiteration of police-recorded statistics does nothing but generate fear.

Yesterday's bulletin comes with the usual Home Office "health warning" that while the number of recorded crimes rose over the period in question by 14 per cent, "changes in the number of offences recorded do not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of changes in the amount of crime committed." True enough, but since the Home Office knows the figures will be abused by the police, the media and

BRIDLINGTON HAUNTS TUC

The Trades Union Congress yesterday warned its biggest union, the Transport and General Workers', that unless it implements by next month two outstanding TUC decisions concerning inter-union disputes, another word for membership "poaching", it would face disciplinary action. The TGWU faces the ultimate prospect of expulsion from the TUC.

TUC leaders have been nervous about moving against their largest affiliate. Though losing more members in the last decade than most unions ever dream of having on their rolls, the TGWU is still a giant among the unions and the TUC's largest paymaster. Having expelled the EETPU for a similar offence two years ago, however, natural justice and its own rules require the TUC to bite on the bullet and take on the mighty TGWU.

That would be only half the solution. Inter-union disputes in the TUC are governed by what are known as the Bridlington principles, so called because they were agreed at the 1939 TUC annual conference in the resort of that name.

The Bridlington principles are a classic market distortion. Despite their sometime political and social ambitions, trade unions are essentially private-sector service organisations. Their objectives put them closer to Bupa or the Automobile Association than to the Labour party. They should, as those two organisations do, operate in a free market, offering to employees a range of services which they are at liberty to take or refuse, with free-market competition spurring the unions to better the services they can provide. The customers – employees who wish to become union mem-

politicians why publish them at all? The best *Times* can do, if not to be accused of suppression, is to confine them to an inside page.

The beginning of just such a statistical perversion also occurred yesterday, when 15 men received severe sentences from the Central Criminal Court for activities which most people would not have realised were crimes at all. What the police call "sex offences" range from serious rape to acts between consenting adults in public places. Sex crime figures are largely a function of police decisions to raid public lavatories. The public has been led to believe that sex offences are mostly rapes, thus raising fear among women.

Next quarter's crime statistics will now presumably reveal an increase in sadomasochistic "sex crime". Although the accused at Central Criminal Court were consenting adults acting in private, the jury made a subjective judgment that the behaviour described was beyond the threshold of crime. Thus an activity is criminalised, without any reference to parliament, and the statistical crime wave is impelled ever onwards.

Police forces will now make it their business to seek out perverse sexual activity to which they think a jury would take exception. Judge James Rant, QC, unwise remarked: "The courts must draw the line between what is acceptable in a civilised society and what is not", thus bidding the police to enforce moral judgments and extending the always grey area between unpleasantness, immorality and statutory crime. The case, and the "wave" to which it will give rise, is an illiberal nonsense.

If the police wish to collect figures on their own activities, that is their business and they can do with them what they wish. The Home Office should have nothing to do with a quarterly fiasco that is also a public menace.

bers – would benefit by the range of improved services which competing unions would be forced to develop.

The TUC's Bridlington procedures corrupt the market by offering protectionist bolt-holes to unions which stay within them. Employees who fall foul of them, by joining a union of their choice rather than one designated for them from Congress House, tend to be astonished that such rules are applied to them, and then outraged at such an infringement of their personal freedom. The net effect is often to drive employees into non-unionism – which should hardly be the aim of the TUC.

The Bridlington principles may in any case be unlawful. Labour won union approval earlier this year for the abandonment of its historic support for the closed shop by successfully arguing that European law allows employees the right to join or not join union. That applies to the closed shop, and it applies equally to the Bridlington principles. Bridlington should be scrapped. TUC-leaders reckon privately that doing so could see an across-the-board membership loss of about 20 per cent, a tough price to pay. But the unions would then at least be market-ready, treating employees and their own members fairly.

Ministers know there is little popular support and not much political scope now for further industrial relations legislation before the next election. But party manifestos should follow the European precedent by proposing to outlaw Bridlington, to create a free market for trade unionism in Britain. Until then, the TUC must face the prospect of expelling even a union as big as the TGWU.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dismay over Birmingham Six

From the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

Sir, At a meeting last week the Guildford Four deportation (Lord Devlin, Lord Scarman, Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, Merlyn Rees and myself) considered our next submission to the May enquiry, and then we reviewed the present situation regarding the Birmingham Six case, about which we are becoming increasingly concerned. We are dismayed at the outcome of yesterday's hearing in the Court of Appeal (reports, December 18).

It is most regrettable that the Director of Public Prosecutions has not taken the opportunity of winding up the whole of this miserable affair, and instead is preparing to allow the matter to go to an extended Court of Appeal hearing before a decision is reached. I would implore him to consider afresh whether the Crown at this stage should act in the same conciliatory way as in the case of the Guildford Four by not seeking to sustain the convictions in the light of the new evidence.

Whatever the outcome of the full report by the Devon and Cornwall police, it can surely in no way detract from the significance of the new evidence already available.

Yours faithfully,
BASIL HUME,
Archbishop of Westminster, SW1.
December 18.

From Mr Thomas R. Osborne

Sir, The decision of the Court of Appeal not to deal with the Birmingham Six appeal until February 1991 brings the judiciary into disrepute, not only with members of the public but with members of their own profession.

The outstanding appeal is of such major importance, both to the families of the six men concerned and to the public generally, that all arrangements for the vacation should have been disregarded in the interests of justice.

Yours sincerely,
THOMAS R. OSBORNE,
Osborne Morris & Morgan
(Solicitors),
Danbury House, West Street,
Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire.
December 18.

Wanted: organists

From Mr D. J. Oliver

Sir, The Vicar of Brompton (December 7) states that those organists who are willing to adapt to contemporary ways are welcome in any church. The implications for Mr Peter Jones (November 30) and those who seek to exercise their hard-won skills in the service of the Church are terrifying.

Evangelical clergy who have problems, actual or potential, with organists should install a barrel organ, which will not presume to know what does or does not appeal to the younger generation. With minimal instruction the vicar could play it himself and be at one and the same time traditional and contemporary.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID OLIVER,
Marlborough House,
Westbury, Wiltshire.
December 9.

From Mr John Ewington

Sir, In my experience, *pace* Mr Millar (December 7), countless young people love the formality of robed choirs and all the discipline which it involves. They do not want the same music in church as they tap their feet to at a pop concert.

The archbishops' certificate in church music is attracting many young people, who enjoy the study skills associated with evening or correspondence courses.

It is a sad reflection on our theological colleges that little if any time is given to prospective ordinands in the study of church music and its place in the context of the liturgy.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN EWINGTON
(General Secretary),
Guild of Church Musicians,
Hillbrow,
Godstone Road,
Betchley, Surrey.
December 10.

Teacher appraisal

From Dr Donald B. Clutton

Sir, Today you report Mr Kenneth Clarke as saying: "If someone is not capable of managing and teaching a class to a required standard, they should be expected to leave the job." If only teacher appraisal were that simple! What is the standard?

Given today's wide diversity of educational ideologies leading to radically differing approaches to teaching, it is quite possible for an excellent "traditional" teacher, instructed in maintaining good discipline in order to impart knowledge and skills, to find himself being appraised by someone of the permissive/progressive/ self-expression view of education. This could result in a poor appraisal.

When I worked in teacher-training I saw this happening. I once had to overrule a college tutor who wanted to fail an excellent woman student because he had "caught her teaching the whole class at the same time". Rather than in groups or individually,

Safeguards for UK fishing interests

From the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Sir, Your leading article, "Fishy business" (December 19), is an unjust and inaccurate portrayal of the British position. The United Kingdom has been in the forefront in promoting an effective conservation policy for fish stocks, particularly in the North Sea.

Sound conservation practices are the only means of safeguarding the long-term interests of fishermen. Indeed, I was fisheries minister when the UK presidency in 1986 successfully pressed the European Community to increase the minimum mesh sizes from 80mm to 90mm.

However, the European Commission's current proposal to increase the minimum mesh size to 120mm makes no conservation or management sense. That is why I said in the fisheries debate last week that the fisheries commissioner did not know one end of a net from the other.

Although 120mm would be suitable in a cod fishery, much of the North Sea comprises a mixed fishery including haddock and whiting. These species, even when

fully mature, cannot be caught with a 120mm net. The Government undertook some research to verify this, using a 120mm net in the haddock/whiting fishery. We caught eight fish with it!

The Commission's proposals take no account of this and, if implemented, would have a devastating effect on the industry. That is why we have put forward alternative proposals for making fishing gear more selective in a way which would both enhance conservation of the stocks and also retain a future for the British fishing industry.

Your readers deserve to know the facts. For the six years I have been involved with fisheries I have "sided with the conservationists and the long-term health of British fishing". It is a pity that this leading article chose to ignore my consistent and committed position.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN GUIMMER,
Ministry of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food,
Whitehall Place, SW1.
December 19.

Council reforms

From the President of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

Sir,

This society agrees that local government needs a vote of confidence from central government ("Elected city mayors", leading article, December 4). We are also keen to encourage a wide debate about the way in which local councils might be revitalised.

We believe that the time has come to allow a period of experiment in a number of local authorities by providing them with a choice of internal forms. Thus, for example, elected mayors, electoral reform, changes to council size, use of referendum, powers of general competence, citizen ballot and urban parishes could be introduced as a positive local choice for a period of observation to see how well they worked, and whether they might

prove of general application. If all local authorities were given a choice, a variety of operating practices could co-exist, reflecting local preferences.

Further major structural change is likely to cause conflict between county and district, diverting attention from issues which are of greater concern. These include securing a stable financial regime for local authorities, reviewing their democratic processes to encourage greater participation, and opening up the British system to experiment with alternative forms learned from overseas. We shall shortly be publishing papers commissioned as a contribution to this debate.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER JEFFERIES, President,
Society of Local Authority
Executives,

Elmwood, Croydon, Park Lane, Croydon, Park Lane, Croydon, Surrey.

Equal access

From Mr Bruce Lidington

Sir, Mr Justice Ebwank's High Court condemnation of a child's right to equal contact with separated parents (report, December 12) is a severe, retrograde step for all who have concern for children's welfare through the current crisis of family-breakdown.

His ruling, if accepted as a principle, would effectively mean that our courts should actively obstruct a child's equal relationship with both parents, after divorce. This smacks of the worst kind of social-engineering. It also flies in the face of the available skills in the service of the Church.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE LIDINGTON
(National Council member, Families Need Fathers),
159 Butler Road, Harrow, Middlesex.
December 12.

Privatisation offers

From Mr Raymond Wergan

Sir, It is wrong to say, as your leader ("Access to justice", December 13), that the Crown Prosecution Service has a "preference for crown court proceedings over the magistrates' courts". Indeed, this is somewhat ironic, in view of the fact that the CPS is often accused of under-charging in order to keep cases in the lower court.

Where an offence is triable, either on indictment or summarily, it is the duty of the magistrates to consider the most suitable mode of trial, having regard to any representations made by the prosecution or the defence. The CPS only wishes cases to be committed to the crown court when the circumstances clearly warrant such a course.

In addition, the Crown Prosecution Service supports the recently issued National Mode of Trial Guidelines. These were formulated by Lord Justice Farquharson's working party, in which the CPS actively participated.

Yours faithfully,
ALLAN GREEN,
Director of Public Prosecutions,
Crown Prosecution Service,
4-12 Queen Anne's Gate, SW1.
December 14.

Filling in at the Tate

From Mr A. Kenneth Snowman

Sir, It seems to me that a happy solution to the reported problem of holes in the roof of the Tate Gallery (report, December 10) might be achieved if some of the miscellaneous builders' materials left lying about the floors and applied to the walls of the gallery by costly contemporary masters were to be put to practical use in the repair of the offending holes.

They would thus provide much needed space for paintings and sculptures of merit which presently languish in the Tate Gallery reserve.

Yours,
A. KENNETH SNOWMAN,
Garrick Club, Garrick Street, WC2.

Moveable

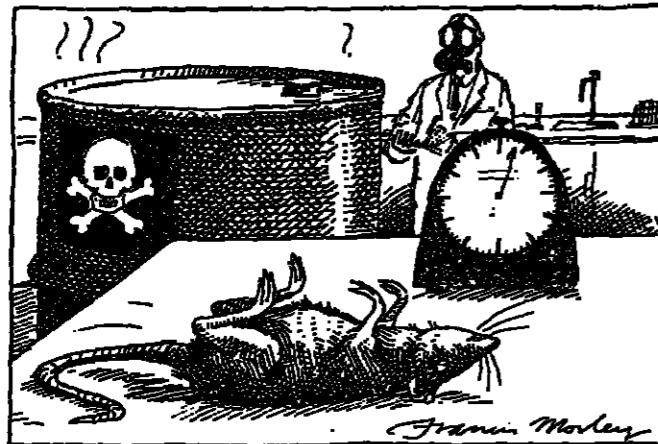
MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stuttford

Preparing for the worst

The defence ministry has been telephoning reserve and Territorial Army doctors and nurses to ask if they would consider going to the Gulf; 25 per cent of those approached have expressed a willingness to serve there, provided arrangements can be made to cover their existing work. More volunteers are still needed; it is hoped to send 1,500 additional medical personnel. Successful candidates will probably be under 45, of either sex, from any speciality. At this stage the campaign is almost as laid-back as the one used in 1956 to recruit tank troop leaders for Suez. Then, the cavalry decided against anything as proletarian as a "call-up"; instead a languid

officer from the War Office telephoned his acquaintances to explain that as Scotland and the grouse moors would temporarily lose their fashionable appeal, he was organising an autumnal party to visit the Middle East. He got all the volunteers he needed.

If war breaks out it will be an armoured battle, very different from Suez; inevitably, casualties with burns from destroyed tanks will be heavy. The Royal Army Medical Corps is skilled at providing immediate treatment for burns, before the casualty can be speedily evacuated to a specialised burns unit, but experience with casualties of gas warfare is now virtually non-existent in the British army, although one former SAS medi-



Natural danger

Nothing could be more natural than the foxglove growing in the English countryside, and in carefully defined doses its dried leaves are an invaluable tool in the treatment of heart disease; but taken in excess, they can kill. The naive belief that everything natural is healthy, and anything manufactured in the laboratory should at best be regarded with suspicion, is dangerous. Equally hazardous is the concept that if a small amount of a substance is good for you, more will be even better. Vitamins A and D, and, recently, niacin, one of the vitamin B complex, have all been shown to be toxic in excessive doses; tragically, some of the people who have suffered severe liver damage from exces-

sive niacin were health enthusiasts trying to lower their cholesterol. The search for a healthy diet has created a food supplements business worth £140 million a year, but whereas a multi-vitamin pill for the badly nourished flat dweller, or extra vitamins C and E for patients with potential heart disease, can be justified, can propolis, a resin snatched from plants by bees and usually used to seal their hives, be the panacea its distributors claim? Will cranberry juice keep away cystitis, and guarana, described as a legendary herb used by Amazonian Indians, really boost "energy, endurance, vitality and stamina"? Already the health department has warned doctors that germanium, a quite useless product widely



bottom of the league, vodka. Hangovers would also be eased if partygoers remembered to drink plenty of fluids before going to bed, and to take their Alka-Seltzer rather than waiting until the morning.

But children, too, can suffer at Christmas, not in their case from port or even too many sweets, but from the general excitement, or even the less happy tensions engendered by the proximity of too many warring adults whose only link too often is shared genes. The police say calls to settle domestic incidents always



peak over the Christmas holidays. One group particularly vulnerable is the children who are prone to atopy – the allergies which give rise to rhinitis (hay fever), asthma and eczema. Staying in other people's houses subjects them to a battery of trigger factors which have been removed from their own. Christmas does not render a grandmother's housemates any less irritating.

As there is a psychological factor in atopy, the tensions of Christmas, whether unpleasant ones such as feuding relatives, or exciting ones like present opening, may also precipitate an attack. Children with asthma who are going away from home should not forget their home peak flow meter, together with all their appropriate remedies. And parents should call a local doctor if they are worried; doctors never resent being called to see an asthmatic child.

Festive after effects

If adults worship Bacchus too devoutly this Christmas, they may well suffer the tortures of the damned when their heads pound from cerebral oedema. But hangovers are self-inflicted; nobody forced them to drink too much, and they have only themselves to blame if they did not realise the relative strength of the drinks they had and their position in the hangover league. First is the Liverpool of the league, followed in order by heavy and red wines, brandy, sherry, rum, whisky, cider, beer, white wine, gin and, at the

He sourced his compatible in The Times.



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GET THEM THROUGH
THE TIMES

Source: NRS Oct 1989 - Sept 1990

cal officer did organise private London hospital treatment for some of the victims of Iraqi gas attacks in the Iraq/Iran war. Nerve gas, which causes rapid paralysis by interrupting the transmission of nerve impulses, has introduced a new level of horror to gas warfare. When one of the first captured German gas canisters was opened at Porton Down late in the second world war, a research worker turned his back for a moment to pick up his notebook to record the effect on the animal he had exposed to it. By the time he looked back, the animal had died. Similar demonstrations have impressed on succeeding generations of soldiers the need for prevention rather than treatment.

The Iraqis have also used vesicants (blistering gases) against the Iranians and Kurdish tribesmen; these gases are the successors to the mustard and lewisite gas used in the first world war, and stockpiled in the second. With a blistering gas the initial damage is to the eyes and the mucous membranes of the tongue, throat and lungs; if the initial ulceration becomes secondarily infected, death may later come from bronchial pneumonia. The intensity and speed of the reaction depends on the chemical composition of the gas; mustard gas was slower to act but more damaging, lewisite faster but less disabling.

sold in health shops, could cause kidney damage.

Natural remedies may well be effective and safe, but the shopper would be well advised to use them only when they have been subjected to the same tests as, say, the latest Glaxo product. The recent example set by several London teaching hospitals which have carried out scientific trials on a Chinese herbal mixture, and have found it not only safe but apparently useful in the treatment of eczema, could well be emulated.



Gabriele Rossetti's 1870 drawing, *Jane Morris Lying on a Sofa*: chronic fatigue is not new, and some believe it simply acquires new labels

Is help at hand for those too tired to lift a finger?

Chronic fatigue syndrome can be a cycle of misery for sufferers. Jeremy Laurance looks at why the condition remains a mystery

What is chronic fatigue? Alas,

there are no answers yet. The jury is still out. But there is one curious fact about chronic fatigue sufferers. They share several features with sufferers from other unexplained illnesses in the past. In the Sixties it was people with backache (for which disc lesions were blamed then) who were in the medical spotlight. In the Seventies the focus swung to premenstrual tension – said to account for all manner of mental and physical disturbances – and then to anxiety (accompanied by the boom in tranquilliser prescribing). By the Eighties food allergy had taken centre stage until it was displaced by chronic fatigue.

But for some people, fatigue becomes so severe that it disrupts their lives. They cannot run a house or keep a job, and find most activities exhausting. These sufferers from chronic fatigue syndrome (defined as at least a 50 per cent reduction in activity for at least six months) have an extreme version of a common condition, not a separate illness. Its origin is controversial because it involves physical and psychological elements, touching on the sensitive area of the mind's effect on the body.

Our understanding of chronic fatigue syndrome, or myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), as it is also known, is still so rudimentary that it is more easily defined by what it is not. Chronic fatigue is not a disorder of muscle function, but neither is it "all in the mind". It has no single cause, viral or otherwise. It is not even clear whether it is infectious. It is not confined to "yuppies". It is not a discrete illness but the far end of a spectrum. "We have to ask why some people develop an extreme example of something that is widely present in the ordinary population," says Professor Anthony Mann, of the Institute of Psychiatry in London.

The sufferers from all these conditions have certain features in common: lethargy, sleeplessness, digestive disorders, depression, unexplained aches and pains. Some doctors believe they may be the same patients, given a different medical label as medical fashions have changed. "Throughout medical history there has been a chronically ill group who suffered from the condition then in vogue," says Anthony Clare, the clinical professor of psychiatry at Trinity College, Dublin. "In the Twenties it was focal sepsis, for which the recommended treatment was removal of the lymph gland. It has a curious echo today in the suggestion that ME patients should have the amalgam fillings in their teeth replaced in case of mercury poisoning."

As research into the condition continues, the puzzle deepens. The most popular suspect is a virus, but it has proved impossible to track down. There have been 30 recorded outbreaks of the disease around the world (such as that at the Royal Free Hospital in 1955, when dozens of staff fell ill) but no single infectious organism has been found which is common to them all. Sometimes a virus is clearly implicated but often it is not.

Abnormalities have been found in the immunological responses of patients with chronic fatigue, but there are "no consistent results in any patient group", according to Dr Les Borysiewicz, of the department of medicine at Addenbrooke's hospital, Cambridge.

Attention has focused on a possible disturbance in the ordinary balance of the Epstein-Barr virus in the body, which is carried by 90

per cent of the population. But it is not found in all patients with chronic fatigue and treatment with an anti-viral drug has no effect.

Another suspect, enteroviruses, also shows an increasing prevalence of infection in chronic fatigue patients. But again they are not present in all.

The focus on a viral cause may

be more a reflection of the new interest in immunology, which has grown as a result of AIDS, than any real evidence. The American magazine *Newsweek* recently published a seven-page article on the latest research. "It really is a measure of how gripped America is by it," Professor Clare says. But on the evidence so far, the disease could just as plausibly be caused by toxins in the environment.

Is chronic fatigue syndrome a disorder of muscle function then? Apparently not. Though sufferers

'Doctors who deny it are medical dinosaurs. These people are ill'

feel tired even before they begin an activity and their fatigue is made worse by both mental and physical effort, electrical response tests show that the muscles are normal.

The problem with fatigue is that it is self-perpetuating. In experiments, medical students put to bed for three weeks suffered a complete loss of fitness and took weeks to recover. Lack of exercise upset muscle function. For this reason, Richard Edwards, professor of medicine at Liverpool university, advises chronic fatigue sufferers not to take life too easily, in sharp contrast to the advice offered by self-help groups. "Rest of itself is harmful," Professor Edwards says. At Liverpool, patients are treated by physiotherapists with a gradually increasing programme of physical exercise.

But it is the psychiatric aspects of the condition that are the most controversial. Fatigue is strongly – but not always – associated with depression, anxiety and stress. Two-thirds of hospital patients with chronic unexplained fatigue

are almost certainly the product of an array of factors, not a single cause. The danger for sufferers is that the illness can become self-perpetuating. It may begin with an infection or other event causing fatigue which leads into a cycle of rest, growing unfitness, more fatigue and inability to cope with work, causing stress and sleeplessness; the sufferer becomes run-down and prone to a worse reaction when the next infection occurs.

The aim of treatment is to break the cycle. But the biggest burden that sufferers have to bear is ignorance of the causes of the illness and uncertainty about how to escape from it. As Professor Clare puts it: "Most people would much rather have a disease that will kill them than an unexplained syndrome with which they will have to live."

BREATHING SPACE Selfridges' Santa

Keep fit for the big drop

I'VE been a Father Christmas for a long time – hundreds of years now. I leave preparations for the season to Mother Christmas but on Christmas Day, after I've finished my rounds, we eat a fat-free Christmas pudding which she makes, and a lot of fruit. I used to eat venison but I don't anymore – Rudolph gets a bit upset. So we tend to stick to turkey or pheasant. Some cheese and a glass of port. We don't eat many sweets.

I walk to church and back on Christmas morning, and I have to take out the reindeer and exercise them. I come in every day from Lapland to Selfridges. It doesn't take very long, we just have to watch out for the odd Boeing 747.

Stress isn't really a problem, after all these years you just learn to cope with it. One thing I do find most beneficial is a spoonful of honey in hot milk before I go to bed. It works wonders.

You need to be fit to carry the sacks of toys. I walk a lot, and try to keep on a fat-free diet – I've got

drink too much, just a little sip, to show that I've been. Lots of girls and boys leave carrots for Rudolph. He likes that because it's quite tiring for him galloping backwards and forwards.

After the Christmas lunch I have a well-earned rest, and maybe watch a bit of television in the evening. I take it easy for a week or so with Mother Christmas – she needs it. She spends most of her time cooking and making jam.

I don't smoke and don't drink too much. In the past I have attempted to make my own wines, which were quite successful with the gnomes. But over the festive season it's important to be careful, eating healthily.

I hope people won't drink too much, especially if they are driving, and it's not very pleasant to wake up on Boxing Day with an awful hangover. Go for a walk even if it's only ten or 15 minutes, some fresh air will do you a lot of good.

Interview by Pamela Novicka

Cowabunga! Turtles rescue mozzarella

At first glance, there seems little in common between teenage mutant hero turtles and the research work of the food-processing industry. However, the obsession with the animated reptiles has produced an unexpected side-effect.

Turtle-followers are mimicking their idols in droves, not by taking to the streets but to the pizza shops. Demand has soared in the fast-food business for the staple diet of teenage turtles: pizzas sprinkled with flakes of mozzarella cheese.

The trouble has come for the processing companies that supply huge quantities of pre-packaged shreds of the cheese in bulk containers.

Their machines for grating and packing mozzarella have clogged repeatedly as the flakes have stuck together and been turned into great clumps of cheese. One answer was to dust the fragments with cellulose, because this makes it easier for the morsels to flow freely through the chute and into their containers. However, scientists at the food-processing research laboratories of the BOC group, south London, produced a novel solution after the packagers in one large company asked for help with their machine-clogging.

Their answer was based on the modification of a new invention, Cryoflow, for the instant deep-freezing of all sorts of substances by bathing them in the super-cold of liquid nitrogen or a gaseous aerosol of the nitrogen as it vapourises from the liquid state at minus 196C.

The technologists are designing machines that flash-freeze various types and sizes of foodstuffs and makes bulk-handling, storage and packaging much easier.

Accelerated nitrogen freezing is being used for storage of not only more familiar items such as soft fruits, vegetables and fish and meat stuffs, but also fresh yoghurt and fresh



Demand for turtle food clogged cheese machines

as a liquid droplet vaporises when it is released from a dispenser. The reaction has been used to drive air out of food packages and containers before they are sealed. The process is applied to packets or tubs of peanuts, whose shelf life is reduced by the oxygen in the air surrounding them.

The advance comes from dispensing just one droplet of liquid nitrogen into every packet a few seconds before the container is sealed, allowing enough time for the nitrogen to vaporise and purge the air before the lid is closed.

So while the fixation with hero turtles will soon fade into memory, the new applications of cryogenic technology are likely to continue to transform food-processing.

PEARCE WRIGHT

Magic of Mexico for media winner

The final results of the 1990 UK Technology Awards sponsored by the *Times* and Hewlett Packard



The winners (back row, left to right): Paul Simons, Chris Bell, Andy Turnbull, Rick Nye. Front row: John Lettice, Alison Hjul, Tony Collins, David Tebbutt, Barry Fox

An article on the use of tone pads to make free calls from payphones has helped to win freelance journalist Barry Fox the title of news journalist of the year in the 1990 UK Technology Press Awards. His prize is a tour of Mexico City and Acapulco.

The awards, now in their seventh year and sponsored by *The Times* and Hewlett Packard, the computer and electronics company, were announced at last week's dinner at Claridges, London, hosted by the writer and broadcaster Alan Coren.

Mr Fox, a freelance who writes regularly for *New Scientist*, also won the merit award for best treatment of a technical subject with articles on three-dimensional television and tapeless recording studios.

The award for the best television or radio programme went to the Electric Avenue series for *Computing the President*, produced by Paul Simons for the BBC, showing the behind-the-scenes technology in American presidential campaigns.

Mac User, a fortnightly magazine for Apple Macintosh computer users, won two categories, as the best journal of the year, with an award for editor Alison Hjul, and as the best designed journal, with an award for art editor Andy Turnbull. The panel of 20 judges were from television, national newspapers and the leading publishing and trade associations

Goodbye Tracey, hello Robot

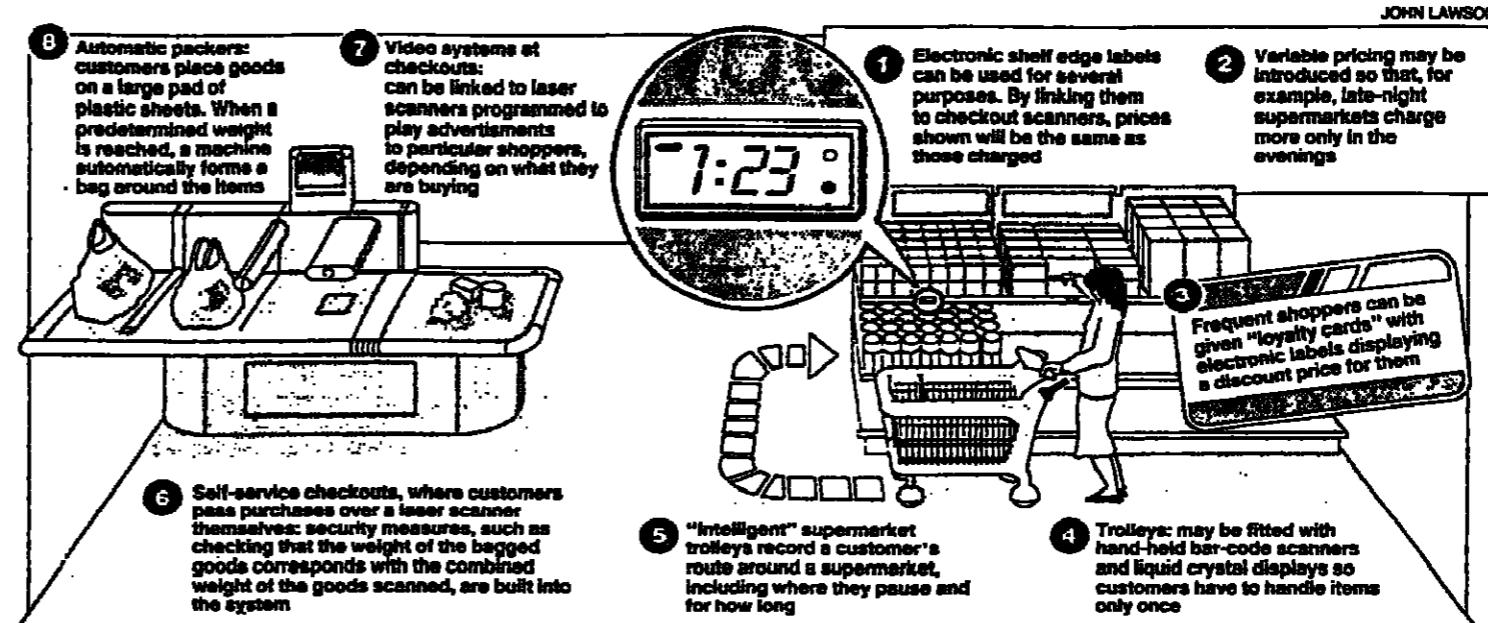
Supermarket queues could disappear with full electronic shopping, reports Richard Pawson

RICHARD PAWSON

When you next find yourself stuck in the supermarket checkout queue, it may be comforting to know that within five years such queues will have all but disappeared. Technology is about to change the face of shopping.

The checkout system is the bane of supermarket operations. The tills take up valuable floor space and absorb nearly a third of the labour cost in employing Traceys and Sharons behind the machines. To the customer, checkouts mean delays and repeated handing of purchases — from shelf to trolley, trolley to conveyor belt, then into box or carrier bag. Laser scanners and cheque printers have improved flow, but forward-thinking supermarkets are looking for ways to bypass the process altogether.

Check Robot is a joint venture by Procter & Gamble and Donelly Marketing, on trial in several American supermarkets. Customers take items from their trolleys and pass them over a laser scanner on a moving belt. The items are then tagged by supermarket staff. Similar systems being launched in Europe incorporate security measures to check, for example, that the



total weight of the bagged goods equals the combined weight of the items scanned. Trials suggest that four out of ten customers will use self-checkout lanes.

In Britain, Marks & Spencer is experimenting with a robot packer. Customers place their goods on a large pad of plastic sheets. When a predetermined weight has been reached, the machine forms a bag around the items.

The most imaginative solution, however, is to incorporate the checkout system into the supermarket trolley. At the Albert Heijn

experimental "fun store" in Tilburg, The Netherlands, trolleys are fitted with hand-held bar-code scanners and a liquid crystal display. Removable and reusable crates that fit on to the trolley mean that customers have to handle every item only once.

Some supermarkets are also testing electronic shelf-edge labels. Liquid crystal displays replace the conventionally printed shelf-price labels, and the prices are updated by the computers that operate the barcode scanners at the checkout. Electronic shelf labelling will allow supermarkets to make instanta-

neous price changes with the possibility of variable pricing. Prices could vary during the day to encourage off-peak shopping.

New forms of electronic discount coupons are planned to improve precision. Vision 1000 is a promotional video system, located at the checkout, that selects promotions according to purchases made by the customer, as detected from the barcode scanner. A discount can then be logged electronically on to a special customer payment card.

Identifying customer purchasing patterns is seen as a crux of gold by

some supermarket operators. One is experimenting with intelligent trolleys that record the routes that customers take through the store, where they pause, and for how long.

Customers may not welcome such intrusions. A senior manager from one big British supermarket chain says: "Supermarket customers value anonymity. When it becomes apparent that computers are charting their every move, they may go elsewhere."

• The author is a senior consultant with the management consultants Butler Cox.

Some people spend all their lives believing in Father Christmas.

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Exploitation with a human face

Teenage mutant turtles, children under threat or robotic fantasy tales: Is this the choice of family film entertainment during the holidays? Geoff Brown discovers a shortage of wholesome Christmas fare

Tis the week before Christmas. Santa is busy rounding up reindeer; the film distributors are holding parties; the public is knee-deep in last-minute shopping. No new films are being released; customers will have to be satisfied with the old. But will the customers be satisfied? If parents wish to take their children for a seasonal trip to see movies on a big screen — or if children want to go, yanking their parents behind them — what are this year's options?

The ubiquitous Mutant Turtles — "jean, green, and on the screen" — can be found throughout the land, of course, rattling off their dupe talk in the murky New York sewers, gobbling up pizzas and combatting the Shredder, a renegade ninja master with hooligan kids at his beck and call. If your taste runs more to animatronic rocks, birds, flying dragons and clanking robot giants, then *The Neverending Story II*, set in the imaginary world of Fantasia, might be the answer. Or perhaps you fancy the biff-bash of comic-strip heroes? Here is Captain America in the film of the same name — square-jawed, peabrain, saving the world from the Red Skull, a Nazi remnant who looks much like Jack Palance horribly overheated in a micro-wave oven.

Disappointment looms, however, the moment you want something outside the action-fantasy spectrum: *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, say, or a touching yarn about a boy and his dog, or any tale that bounces its adventures off direct observation and recognisable, believable characters. Such films get made occasionally, though they rarely benefit from major expenditures of time, talent and imagination.

The only current family film that draws upon a degree of everyday reality is *Home Alone*. Even there, the boy hero leads a charmed life in an American suburban palace, strewn with stairways, lights and appliances, supported by parents who can whisk their large family off to Paris for a Christmas holiday without a moment's regard to the cost.

To deny the appeal and importance of fantasy to the develop-

ing child would be absurd: without fantasy, there would never have been *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *The Wizard of Oz*, or Disney's vintage cartoon features. But in the past there were always other options, other avenues to explore: *Treasure Island*, tales of the Wild West or high-jinks in the dorm, derring-do in foreign parts. Now the linked forces of fashion and aggressive marketing have conspired to shrink choice.

Among the 16 U-certified films released in Britain this year — in itself a paltry figure — only *Courage Mountain* (a curious Heidi spin-off) and *King of the Wild* (concerning a boy and his horse in the 1720s) kept the old human contours of a family film. The PG-rated releases included a new version of *Treasure Island* but the plodding affair, made primarily for television, was in no fit state to keep a tradition alive.

Christian Bale's Jim Hawkins was bland, while Charlton Heston's Long John Silver seemed cut from cardboard.

Fantasy predominates in movies partly because fantasy characters can be readily marketed as toys. The Mutant Turtles, whether on the big screen or small, have proved a toymaker's dream. There are four basic characters for the lot to collect, even though there is nothing visual to distinguish Leonardo from Michelangelo, or Raphael, or Donatello, except the colour of their head scarves. Once these have been acquired, the avid child can purchase subsidiary characters, like the wise rat, Splinter; then they can progress — parents' wallets permitting — to accessories, vehicles, and "play sets" simulating the turtles' sewer paradise.

There is nothing new about spin-off merchandise. Walt Disney led the way in the early Thirties, by promoting Mickey Mouse and company in a range of cheap items. Indeed, the entire Hollywood star system came about partly through the need for commodities to exploit, faces to sell to the fans. But cinema's relationship with merchandise now borders on the incestuous. Entire films have been made — *Masters of the Universe*, *The Transformers*, *The Care Bears*.



Fantasy is vital to the child: Macaulay Culkin as the temporarily abandoned boy facing burglars in *Home Alone*

Movie and its sequels — simply to promote a toy company's particular product.

The *Turtles'* film was financed from independent sources, yet it remains anchored in the supermarket environment: every child helplessly absorbs the moment it watches television. From *Trivial Pursuit* to fast-delivery pizza companies, the *Turtles* have all of America's popular urban culture at their command: that, indeed, is the basic joke.

There is more, much more, to come. Film-makers are now exploiting the Nintendo brand of video games; while Ron Howard, director of *Cocoon* and *Parent-*

hood, is said to be hatching "conceptual franchise movies", where the merchandise, the sequel, even the theme-park attraction, will be built into the material.

Amidst this onslaught of machine-tooled fantasies in plastic and rubber, those films that deal in flesh and blood stand out bolder than ever. No wonder *Home Alone* zoomed to the top of the American box-office chart, earning almost \$70 million (£35.9 million) within three weeks. For all the plush trimmings, the film spins its comic slapstick round a simple, earthbound situation that every child can grasp. What would happen if you were left in the

house, without parents, for days on end, and burglars decided to call?

At first, *Home Alone* exploits simple wish-fulfilment ("Guys," the young hero shouts to his absent family, "I'm eating junk and watching rubbish!"). Then it slips into the slapstick adventure mode, pitting the child against two bumbling villains, with a few elaborate pauses for tears.

Like many before them, John Hughes and Chris Columbus, the film's writer and director, are dipping into the same well-spring Spielberg tapped so adroitly in *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*. Here again is the idealised suburban

domestic setting, with a child hero isolated from adults, conquering his fears; here again is a sentimental anthem to comradeship and family togetherness. You can draw more comparisons when *E.T.* makes its television debut on Christmas Day afternoon.

Home Alone is not the subtlety of comedies, though children should be less irked than adults by the repetitive gags. And for all the action stunts, special effects and fancy dressing, it remains a film with a human face. In a season swimming with mutant turtles, cardboard superheroes and assorted grotesqueries, clutch this with gratitude.

Guide to family films until the end of the year

BATMAN (12): Not for tots: gloomy sets have replaced the television series' Pop Art glow, while the Caped Crusader (Michael Keaton) is anguished by Jack Nicholson's overbearing Joker. National Film Theatre (071-928 3535), December 22 only.

CAPTAIN AMERICA (PG): Crass, disjointed adventures of Marvel Comics Superheroes, fighting to save the US President from the clutches of the dreaded Red Skull. Regional release only.

A CHRISTMAS STORY (PG): Endearing, neglected comedy (1983) about a Forties' child desperate for an air rifle from Santa. A treat for adults, too. National Film Theatre (071-928 3535), December 23 only.

DICK TRACY (12): Chester Gould's detective revives by a blooming Warren Beatty, full of comic-strip colours should at least enjoy the visuals. National Film Theatre (071-928 3535), until December 23.

HOME ALONE (PG): Plucky kid alone over Christmas faces up to bumbling burglars. Slick, family fun, with an appealing child actor (Macaulay Culkin). Warner (071-439 1527) Cannon Haymarket (071-439 1527) plus regions.

THE LITTLE MERMAID (U): Bright, busy Disney version of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale of同情. Acceptable, though lacking most of the company's old fairy-tale magic. Warner (071-439 0791) plus regions.

THE NEVERENDING STORY II (U):

Visually spectacular return visit to Michael Ende's novel. Fantasy fanciers may enjoy, though the plot is a jumble and the child hero unsympathetic. Warner (071-439 1527) plus regions.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES (PG): Cheap, visually murky vehicle for the year's merchandising sensation. Odeon West End (071-530 5252/7816) plus regions.

GEOFF BROWN

MUSIC BUSINESS

Who will collect the pipers' pay?

The world of concert artist management is in turmoil, and Norman Lebrecht looks at the likely musical winners and losers



Rivals? Mark McCormack (left) and Andrew Lloyd Webber

The collapse this week of Britain's oldest concert agency and a takeover deadline at Europe's largest artists' management have thrown the musical marketplace into considerable turmoil. Ibs and Tillett, founded in 1906 and cherished by sensitive artists for its devotion to their welfare, founded into voluntary liquidation beneath a pile of overdue invoices.

Ibs overcame a 1970s crisis to thrive as a conduit for state-promoted Russian talent, headed by the victorious Leeds pianist Vladimir Ovchinnikov and the lower-register vocalists Dmitri Horosovskiy and Paata Burchuladze. It also regained the veteran German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and his soprano wife, Julia Varady.

Most of these eminences will follow two Ibs partners, Mark Hildrew and Christa Phelps, into a new agency being formed with fresh capital within Andrew Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Group. Lloyd Webber, who already has publishing and recording interests, is keen to establish a roster of musicians under his aegis — an ambition shared by other outsiders who have gazed yearningly at the velvetly and lucrative embrace of concert artists and commercial sponsors.

While Ibs is being wound up, the future of Harold Holt Ltd will be decided by the weekend. Takeover talks have reached a final phase with Mark McCormack's International Management Group which, having cornered the market in McEnroe, Borg, and other leading sports personalities, bankers for a different class of player. It set up IMG Artists in New York a dozen years ago, but failed to

sign up more than a Davis Cup team of champion soloists. IMG's top string in America is the outstanding violinist Itzhak Perlman, seconded by the mercurial young fiddler Joshua Bell. Its only significant conductors, however, are John Eliot Gardiner and Franz Welser-Most. And while it produces occasional international events with Kiri Te Kanawa and Maria Ewing, it has no permanent classical foothold outside the United States.

Alert to its shortcomings, IMG wood Holt, which commands the largest roster of musical talent in Europe, headed by Simon Raabe and Claudio Abbado in the conductors' league. Murray Perahia and Daniel Barenboim at the piano keyboard and Isaac Stern among its violinists. Holt has also become an important player in orchestral touring, which is easily the most profitable area of musical enterprise. It will tour Abbado's Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in Japan next year, paying the orchestra a record £60,000 a concert, plus fares and accommodation, and it will still come away with a profit.

Holt installed the former Covent Garden chairman Sir Claus Moser to finalise a merger and informed its artists some weeks ago that the deal was done. The love-match, however, hit a snag. IMG, it is believed, suddenly lowered its offer and two Holt managers balked at its demand for a contractual undertaking that would keep them, and their artists, with the merged agency for at least five years. IMG insists that talks with Holt are continuing, and promises an imminent announcement.

The reaction to these events

signs up more than a Davis Cup team of champion soloists. IMG's top string in America is the outstanding violinist Itzhak Perlman, seconded by the mercurial young fiddler Joshua Bell. Its only significant conductors, however, are John Eliot Gardiner and Franz Welser-Most. And while it produces occasional international events with Kiri Te Kanawa and Maria Ewing, it has no permanent classical foothold outside the United States.

In the agency sector has been hostile. "I am pleased to hear that the IMG-Holt deal can be retrieved, it will head for an early clash with Columbia Artists Management (Cam), the enormously powerful New York agency that controls more than 100 conductors and most of the top singers. Cami has copied IMG by setting up a video wing to produce rose-tinted portraits of its megastars for television consumption. Its secretive chief, Ronald Wilford, had gone to ground in Europe this week and is thought to have laid a minefield of contingency plans.

Meanwhile, the Ibs collapse

has left any singers queuing in the creditors' line to await payment of their performing fees. A total of £130,000 is owed by Ibs to its artists. Most are unlikely to receive the full amount.

"If this is true I would be deeply shocked," says Van Walsum of Baca.

It is a clear legal obligation of the agent to protect monies due to their clients. Our association and its members adhere to a strict code of ethics and professionalism. Contrary to some opinions, agents in classical music generally work for very little profit, and I can see how easily a business could get into trouble if it is not properly controlled."

AT A time when most regional and many capital theatres must be hoping for a Christmas miracle at the box office to guarantee survival into the new year, the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre remains a different kind of miracle altogether. Founded during the second world war by the playwright James Bridie, in an abortive attempt to form a Scottish national theatre, it was taken over 20 years ago by a triumvirate consisting of actor and director Giles Havergal, the designer and director Philip Prowse and the playwright Robert David McDonald. Havergal and Prowse had previously worked together in the Home Counties setting of Watford, but nothing of their work there indicated what they were to achieve amid the Gorbals.

Last night, Channel 4 devoted 90 minutes to *Glasgow Citizens*, a remarkable film made by Diane Tamases, who spent most of the past two years simply hanging around "the Citz" with a back-stage camera. She seems to have had no strong editorial line on the theatre, or its survival in the face of artistic and economic pressures from all sides. Nor does she seem to have been surprised by that survival, nor even to have wondered how it had been achieved by three men in dark suits, who still look as out of place in Glasgow as three kilted Highland dancers would look in the box office of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket.

Their secret is perhaps not so great: it has to do with a central European artistic intensity and integrity, a determination to forbid lethargy onstage or in the stalls, and a sense of belonging to a broader church than the more parochial repertoire of other community theatres would indicate.

The Citz made Glasgow a City of Culture about ten years before the official designation, dragging an often uneasy local audience into close contact with transvestite

Shakespeare and impeccable bad taste of all kinds. Not that the management was uniquely keen to shock its patrons: in some ways Havergal maintains the best traditions of the paternalist Victorian actor-manager, while Prowse was at his best throwing new energy into what apparently dated a drama as Noel Coward's *The Vortex*.

What distinguishes the Citz is its unashamed relish of the theatrical at a time when more arid disciplines have been ruling elsewhere. The theatre itself was once a home for Victorian melodrama and, as this documentary indicates, it has never lost that seedy grandeur.

The film found stars such as Glenda Jackson and Maria Aitken cheerfully abandoning the real money of the West End or television, to join a family which would probably have been recognisable to Irving or Barrymore: a group of dedicated thespians living on box-office returns but secure in the knowledge that the next show, to be Anna Karenina or Pinocchio, is the one that is going to turn them around.

Unafraid, the theatre's Citz management stages entire annual seasons on the budget that one small German town would allow an opera house for each production. When in doubt, the company abandons the text altogether and when a new one is needed then Macdonald writes it.

And on that theatrical note, I plan to go back to my own regular seat in the stalls after a year looking at television for these columns; thank you for your agreement, your disagreement, and above all, your interest. I wish my successor strength, enjoyment and a powerful pair of eyes: it is presumably no coincidence that 1990 should have been the year in which I started to need a reliable pair of spectacles.

SHERIDAN MORLEY

• *Hamlet* is expected to be released in Britain in the spring.

CINEMA PREVIEW

Mad Max palpably a hit at Elsinore

Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, starring Mel Gibson, has opened in California, reports Charles Marowitz

When the news of Mel Gibson playing *Hamlet* in Zeffirelli's film version first surfaced, some cynics may have been reminded of Dr Johnson's observation on being told about a woman preacher: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs," said Johnson. "It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all."

In the event, filmgoers are persuaded to suppress all memory of Gibson's previous celluloid incarnation as Mad Max, and admit that, viewed strictly as an unlikely movie star tackling one of the heftiest roles in the dramatic repertoire, Gibson brings it off. He is lucid, playful, soulful, stricken and largely plausible throughout the film. There is not a great deal of growth from the Wittenberg student to the avenging angel that impales the king, but the verse (what there is left of it) always makes sense and his brooding, wide-eyed prince is consistently watchable.

The chief problem is that the film, limned in that lush visual style we have come to associate with Zeffirelli, is predicated on every received notion we have ever had of the play. One looks in vain for either a startling new interpretation or an unexpected twist in the characterisation displayed by the leading players.

The textual cuts (the players are whittled down to walk-ons and Fortinbras is entirely gone) dissolve all of the original's complexity. In its place, there is a taut, fast-moving narrative and some interesting transplants of, for instance, bits of the Nunnery scene into the Play scene.



Mel Gibson: largely plausible

So a young and uninitiated film-going audience coming to this picture would have no difficulty in following its spiraling narrative; they would probably be relieved at the sparsity of verse and wonder why their elders made such a fuss about grasping "the classics".

Paul Scofield's despondent Ghost is far and away the finest performance in the film, with Ian Holm's crafty Polonius running a close second. Helena Bonham-Carter's Ophelia is a triflce wet when she is being put upon by the predatory prince, but charmingly pathological when she loses it. Alan Bates makes Claudio the sensuous epicurean we have become accustomed to since Basil Sydney, and Gertrude benefits enormously from Glenn Close's seasoned portrait of sexual duplicity. (The Closet scene, patterned after Olivier's Oedipal version, goes further, with a lot of matress-humping and kisses on the mouth.)

The screenplay by Christopher De Vore and Zeffirelli nicely breaks up the action of the play's longer scenes, and the settings in no way feel arbitrary or specially "located" — as they often do in Russian Shakespeares. There is a lot gone, but what remains is, on the whole, well spoken and to the point.

If a classic British actor were playing the lead role, our response would probably be very different. But because Mel Gibson, like Hamlet, "is loved of the distressed multitude", it is quite possible to view this *Hamlet* as a marvellous anomaly — a Hollywood version of a Shakespearean classic that actually succeeds in being flashily middle-brow.

• *Hamlet* is expected to be released in Britain in the spring.

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Lost: one comedian's identity

THEATRE
**Russ Abbot Madhouse
Palladium**

DO NOT be misled by music that sounds as though it comes from beneath the headsets of one of those people who sit irritatingly tapping their feet on the London Underground, but it is more clangorous by 1,000 decibels or so. This is an old-fashioned, formulaic evening, the sort that might have bubbled into being on Blackpool or Yarmouth pier at any time in the past 30 years. There is even a stout lady with a crumpled face, to act as stooge when the Archie Rice mood hits the resident comedian.

This is Russ Abbot, a gentleman with a big reputation on television but two problems on the stage. One is that, notwithstanding a face rather like Robert de Niro's and a voice rather like the late Eric Morecambe's, he seems curiously lacking in identity. The other is that he has some pretty drab material to deliver.

The first obstacle does not altogether matter, since he spends a good deal of time impersonating characters ranging from a babbling Scots hooligan ("I came to see a fight and a football match broke out") to a Richard III with a hump like a barrage balloon and 10ft toenails. But the weakness of most of the jokes is irredeemable.

The sketch in which Abbot plays a member of Masochists of

Britain Inc is fun, if only for the gle with which he shoves a great, whirling drill into his mouth to make the toothache more agonising. However, items with him as (respectively) an inept barman, an inept ballet dancer, an inept sound engineer and an inept James Bond have the trodden feel of stuff flat and predictable. A scene in a restaurant seems forgivable only if intended to be self-parodying:

"Waiter, clear my table."

"Not in these trousers I won't."

"Have you spotted dick?"

"No, I haven't seen him."

The supporting performers include the Russettes, three dancers-singers dressed in what might be lurid, crinkly Christmas crackers, and a good juggler in one Mark Robertson. Last night, he blundered just once, while trying to bounce a dozen rings off his nose, over his head and round his neck or something of the sort. Given the shit nothings proliferating around him, it seemed an acceptable failure rate.

At the end, Abbot appeared in a dinner jacket and affably rattled off several jokes in his own accent, including one about asking his wife to try something kinky ("she tied me to the bed and went shopping") and another about the poverty of his background ("I was breastfed by my father"). They came a bit late, though, to establish any strong comic personality. If he was at last being himself, it was still unclear who himself was.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Russ Abbot as the babbling football hooligan, See You, Jimmy

out Spats Palazzo's feet is the stage equivalent of the movie's close-up, and facial expressions are directly modelled on the originals.

Faithful reproduction of the comedy is clearly the intention of Martin Connor's direction, and surely right. Actresses for 50 years have failed to improve on "A handbag" as pronounced by Edith Evans, and Jack Lemmon's exuberant cries and hisses of frustration are far better known: part of the stock of memories shared by filmgoers the world over.

It would be possible for Andy Serkis, in the Daphne role, to find a different way of muttering, "I'm a girl," but to do so would expose him to comment from the stalls. So, in addition, he recreates

Lemon's manically abrupt turns of the head, the double take, the reckless grinning. An ex-hermit ignorant of the film will find all this funny in its own right, but what the show works for is satisfied recognition.

The only notable change comes with the short passage of self-criticism shown by Steven Mann's Joe/Josephine after his idyll with Sugar on the yacht. He has spared us Tony Curtis's strangled vowels as the millionaire, but Bob Merrill's lyrics present him briefly as a heel. The song ends, unsurprisingly, with an admission of love. But then, all the music is unsurprising, only the "Penniless Burns" number rising above pastiche. Nothing wrong with pastiche: *The Boy Friend* is pastiche.

But the music of *Sugar* is forgettable pastiche.

Sarah Payne, sweet and cuddly though her *Sugar* is, captures only some of the breathy helplessness of Marilyn: who only did so, of course, after about a hundred takes.

In the choreography (for this production by David Toguri), the machine-gunning is neatly done with a burst of tap from the gangsters plus a dash of strobe lighting. Simon Higlett's excellent sets give us snowbound Chicago, a double row of berths on the train, sun-bleached Miami and a motor boat circling the stage for Serkis to deliver one of the most famous closing lines in cinema history.

JEREMY KINGSTON

passage early in the Second Symphony's slow movement, where Anthony Robson's solo oboe expounded one of Schumann's most lovely tunes with a sound like a thread of gold. Gardiner shaped phrase and balanced dynamics alertly; it was a pity that his violinists could not always manage some of the fastest passages at tempos.

Malcolm Bilson was to have been the soloist in the same composer's Piano Concerto, but his indisposition meant that we were treated to the ravishing penetrating sound and vividly dramatic singing of Elizabeth Connell in Beethoven's concert aria, "Ah perfido".

STEPHEN PETTITT

Anthony Rapp's performance of the piano concerto was superb, though the orchestra's playing of the symphony was less convincing. The conductor, Simon Rattle, was also excellent, bringing out the best in the orchestra.

There were surprising similarities, too. Given punchy performances of both works, with detail brought fizzingly to life, the Berio seemed to be echoing the Messiaen quite extraordinarily closely. Moreover, both performances exuded a great joy in sound, with exuberant noises of gongs, xylophones and wind in the Messiaen, and in the Berio a haunting realisation of the coda.

Both performances also benefited from excellent soloists: Peter Donohoe managed to combine sharp colour with fullness of sound in the piano solos of the

Messiaen, while in the Berio the strands of words and song were set out plainly and passionately by Terry Edwards as the narrator (using an English translation to telling effect), Electric Phoenix, and a team from the Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College, who aptly brought to the performance the determination and fury of youth.

The new piece, Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Kai*, lived up to the awesome challenge of this company. A single-movement cello concerto, it uses an instrumental ensemble similar to that of the Berio, but with the sound of jazz now pervasive: in the skirt of lamenting saxophones that provides the most prominent thematic idea, in the cutting dry attacks of percussion, bass guitar and harp, in the night colours of the orchestration, in the alternating moods of rampage and elegy.

This jazz, though, is Turnage jazz: there is almost nothing in the piece that sounds like anyone else; the work is a triumphant assertion of this composer's own territory, and of his ability to project strong, vigorous sentiment into a world of bleakness and scepticism. In this, Turnage seems diametrically opposed to, for instance, Kurt Weill, discovering in popular music evidence not of corruption but of integrity and emotional truth. What *Kai* also provided was a fine vehicle for the artistry of the soloist, Ulrich Heinen.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

Among such instances was the

CONCERT
**BCMG/Rattle
Conservatoire/Radio 3**

THIS was another of those special nights with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group nights when their artistic adviser Simon Rattle becomes also their conductor, and draws superb performances from them. Tuesday's programme was right for the occasion: Messiaen and Berio are two composers Rattle is obviously close to, and the choice of their almost contemporary visions of the life beyond — Messiaen's *Couleurs de la Céleste et Berio's *Dantesque Laboramus II** — was well judged to provide sharp contrasts.

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There was a sense of real enjoyment in the playing of the orchestra, particularly in the Berio.

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Labour claims shares go ahead of cards

By NICHOLAS WOOD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR yesterday accused the Post Office of holding up Christmas mail in an attempt to ensure that electricity share certificates were delivered on time.

The allegation was made by Frank Dobson, the Opposition's chief energy spokesman, on the basis of leaked internal Post Office memoranda. It was denied by the Post Office, which said the paperwork generated by the privatisation was being given "separate but equal treatment".

The dispute arose as the energy department said that the "majority of documents" generated by the sale had now been posted and the Royal Mail expected to deliver them before Christmas. Some people would have to wait until after the holiday to receive their share certificates.

Mr Dobson said he had been handed circulars from three different parts of the country instructing local post offices to give priority to share certificates. Sorting offices had been told such mail could be identified from blue tags on mailbags. He had written to Sir Bryan Nicholson, chairman of the Post Office, protesting about the instructions.

He said ministers had timed the sell-off so it was entangled in the Christmas rush and they had allowed the processing of share applications to fall behind schedule. "Now they are giving priority over people who posted early for Christmas and they are also giving priority over pension books or Giro cheques."

Share certificates and other correspondence generated by the electricity sell-off will add about 12.5 million letters to the Royal Mail's workload. But this figure is dwarfed by the 1,500 million items that will be handled by postmen this month. On the busiest days in the Christmas rush, post boxes bulge with more than 100 million letters and cards, twice the usual number.

A Post Office spokesman denied Mr Dobson's claims: "Every share issue dealt with by the Royal Mail is given separate handling. This is for obvious reasons because such mailings involve many millions of extra items which are handled to the Royal Mail from a number of sources. The electricity mailing is being given separate but equal treatment to all other first-class items."

Post Office sources said that the word "preferential" had not appeared in any of their internal memoranda. The blue tags on mail bags were intended to remind staff that the electricity mailing, unlike other bulk mailings, was first class, and should be treated as such.

Santa's address, page 3



Dry docked: a Jeanneau 44 yacht is lowered into position as preparations continue for the London International Boat Show, at Earls Court on January 3. A new 10,000 square-metre hall makes space for a record 800 boats and windsurfers to be displayed

Shy Stuart smiles for the duchess

By LIN JENKINS

STUART Lockwood, the five-year-old boy exploited by President Saddam Hussein of Iraq in a televised meeting with hostages, still bore the scars of his fright when he was presented with a special award yesterday.

Stuart again found all the attention a little daunting. However, he did manage a rare smile when the Duchess of York presented him with his Children of Courage award after a carol service at Westminster Abbey. There took the duchess's hand and walked her to her car, where she gave him her flowers for his mother. His mother, Glenda, aged 37, said Stuart did not like talking about his experience but appeared to be recovering.

Shortly after his appearance in the Iraqi leader's propaganda exercise Stuart was allowed home with his mother and brother, Morgan, aged three, were cut off by the tide on a local beach. She managed to swim to a cliff ledge and drag her mother out before trying to save her brother. Also honoured were Amanda Marriott, aged 11, of Darlington, Amanda Record, aged 12, of Watford, Nicola Martin, aged 12, of Amersham, West Sussex, David Turner, aged ten, of West Yorkshire and Daniel Marley, aged six, of Sawdon, North Yorkshire.

The Woman's Own award was

given in recognition of the bravery of all children in the Gulf conflict. After the ceremony Stuart and ten other children aged four to 12, who were given awards for bravery, personal endurance or inspiring conduct, were treated to lunch at the House of Lords.

Others given awards included Victoria-Marie Clarke, aged four, of Poole, Dorset, who stopped a woman abducting her little sister, Carynn, from their garden.

Matthew and Christian Barlow, of Banbury, Oxfordshire, received their awards for saving their mother after she collapsed with an asthma attack in the night. Christian comforted her while Matthew dialled 999.

Victoria Jones, aged 12, of Dytoid, showed great courage when she, her mother and brother, Morgan, aged three, were cut off by the tide on a local beach. She managed to swim to a cliff ledge and drag her mother out before trying to save her brother. Also honoured were Amanda Marriott, aged 11, of Darlington, Amanda Record, aged 12, of Watford, Nicola Martin, aged 12, of Amersham, West Sussex, David Turner, aged ten, of West Yorkshire and Daniel Marley, aged six, of Sawdon, North Yorkshire.

Arsenal captain sent to prison

Continued from page 1

merciful that no one else was there to be either killed or injured." In Nottingham, the crown court was told that Lesley Hill, aged 37, an airline pilot, of Kingston on Soar, Nottinghamshire, drank herself to sleep and killed a pensioner in a road crash the next morning while still drunk.

Hill was alleged to have bottle of whisky to cure her insomnia. The next morning, when she crashed her sports car into an oncoming Escort, she was still over twice the legal limit.

A pilot for nearly 20 years, Hill was jailed for 18 months with nine months suspended.

Mr John Stobart, for the prosecution, said the driver of the Escort, Stanley Pearman aged 69, suffered a ruptured heart artery.

A police spokesman said afterwards: "This should be a lesson to Christmas drinkers. If you've had a drinks binge, a few hours sleep doesn't make you safe to drive the morning after."

Three other men were jailed yesterday by magistrates at Aldershot, Hampshire. Larry Randall, aged 41, of Elmsleigh Road, Farnborough, was almost four times over the legal drink-drive limit when police stopped his car in Aldershot on December 15. He was jailed for eight weeks and

banned from driving for five years.

Peter Darrah, aged 42, of Ettrick Court, Farnham, was more than twice over the legal limit at Farnborough on November 18. He was jailed for six months and disqualified for a further five years.

Stephen Fitzsimmons, aged 43, years, of Renown Close, West Croydon, was more than three times over the limit. He was jailed for 14 days, fined £450 and disqualified for three years.

Renton orders arts funding shake-up

Continued from page 1

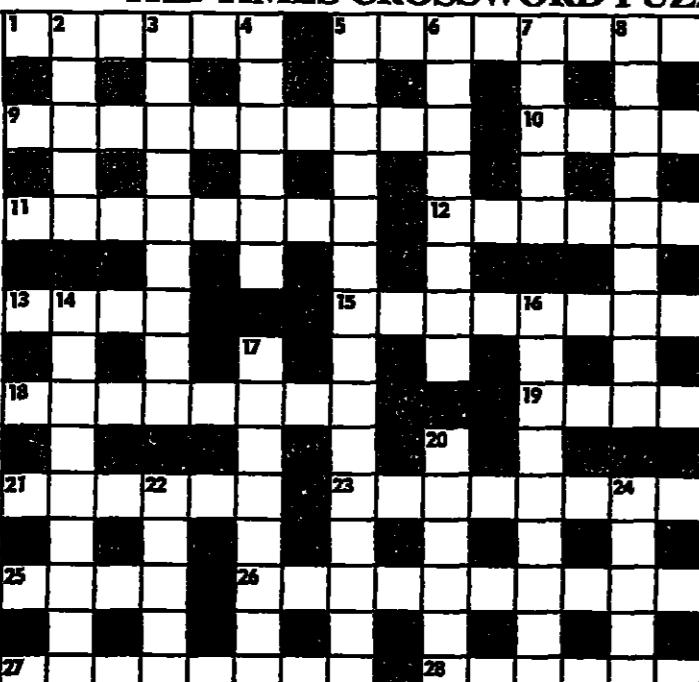
further delegation after the completion of the national arts strategy. Mr Renton has also changed the plans of his predecessor, David Mellor, for the constitution of the new boards. Instead of only 12 members he recommends up to 24. "I believe that these important changes to the structure of arts funding will, properly implemented, achieve their central objectives: coherence in funding policy, strengthen accountability, and structures and systems to ensure value for the taxpayers' money," Mr Renton

wrote to Peter Palumbo, the Arts Council chairman.

The original list ran into controversy, and 31 clients appealed against delegation. The chief area of concern was London, where the Arts Council has scrapped the Greater London Arts Association. The four main orchestras — the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, the Philharmonia and the Royal Philharmonic — objected on the grounds that they were of national and international importance. Other bodies such as the Royal Court Theatre and the Institute of Contemporary Arts also objected to being consigned to the new London Arts Board.

There was also objection from leading companies such as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Hallé and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. The minister has not ruled out the possibility of re-consigning the national companies — the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Opera House, English National Opera and the South Bank Arts Centre — to new boards should that fit in with the new national arts strategy.

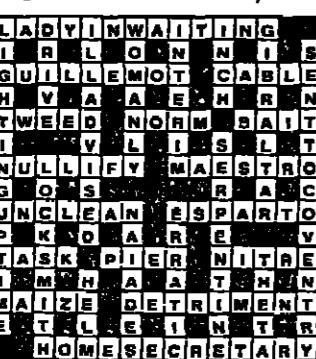
THE TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO 18,482



ACROSS

- 1 God loved her mind (6).
- 5 The right to act at discretion, without any aid (4,4).
- 9 Verne's written about a doctor, taking drama as a way of raising money (6,4).
- 10 Paddy displaying the latest fashion (4).
- 11 Paw is somewhat insipid (8).
- 12 By the sound of it, a wood shed (6).
- 13 Tire of green (4).
- 15 Deserter back inside — he insulted a general (8).
- 18 Engineer excluded from party by boss (6).
- 19 Produces eggs and loaf for the audience (4).
- 21 Stick a poster in this position (6).
- 23 Silky top ordered? I've taken orders (3-5).

Solution to Puzzle No 18,481



WORD-WATCHING

A daily safari through the language jungle. Which of the possible definitions is correct?

By Philip Howard

EPHALITES

- a. A secret traitor
- b. A nightmare
- c. Youths before puberty

WATCHET

- a. A warning cry
- b. Old cricketing position
- c. Pale blue

WILLIWAW

- a. The penis
- b. An Amerindian monodelphid canoe
- c. A violent squall

QUARRENDER

- a. Cambridge University Proctor
- b. A red apple
- c. Stout calico

Answers on page 18

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24-hours a day, dial 0836 401 followed by the appropriate code.

London & SE traffic, roadworks
C London (within N & S Circ), 731
M-way/bridges/M4, 732
M-ways/roads M1-Dartford T, 733
M-ways/roads Dartford T-H, 734
M-ways/roads M25-M4, 735
M25 London Orbital only, 736

National traffic and roadworks
National motorways... 737
West Country... 738
Wales... 739
Midlands... 740
East Anglia... 741
North-west England... 742
North-east England... 743
Scotland... 744
Northern Ireland... 745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 33p per minute (cheap rate) and 44p per minute at all other times.

Concise crossword, page 13

WEATHER

northern England will spread to the rest of the country by early afternoon, turning heavy at times with the chance of some snow on higher ground. The rain will be followed by clearer, showery weather, reaching all but southern areas by the evening. Windy with gales possible on exposed coasts and hills in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Outlook: unsettled and generally cloudy with rain at times.

ABROAD

C	F	C	F	I	F	M	S	T	S	R	M	N
Aleppo	12 54	Malaga	14 57	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Alexandria	15 54	Mallorca	14 57	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Almeria	22 54	Melilla	12 54	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Amman	10 52	Mendoza C	20 55	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Athens	12 55	Milan	27 51	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bahrain	20 54	Montreal	13 56	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Baku	7 45	Moscow	12 55	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	10 52	Montevideo	21 50	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Banff	4 58	Naples	11 52	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Madrid	18 54	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Banff	4 58	Malaga	18 54	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Melilla	18 54	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Milan	27 51	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Montevideo	21 50	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Naples	11 52	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Montevideo	21 50	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Naples	11 52	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Montevideo	21 50	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Naples	11 52	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Montevideo	21 50	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
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Bangkok	4 58	Montevideo	21 50	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bangkok	4 58	Naples	11 5									

BUSINESS

Executive Editor
David Brewerton

THURSDAY DECEMBER 20 1990

مكتبة من الأصل

- BUSINESS AND FINANCE 21-26
- LAW 26
- SPORT 32-36

Electricity post to arrive by Christmas

ADVISERS to the electricity flotation say all 8.5 million letters containing share certificates and returned cheques will be in the post by the week end. About three-quarters had been posted by last night and the Post Office has guaranteed delivery by Christmas.

Electricity shares were firm for the second day on the stock market, and analysts believe there may be no rush to sell once small investors receive their certificates. Manweb, favoured in the City, is just 2p short of its record high, up 2p at 175p and offering a 75p premium on its part-paid price.

Acatos in red

Acatos & Hutchison, the edible oils and fats maker, has suffered a £6.5 million loss for the year to end September because of an ill-starred joint venture in Spain. The company has written off its entire £6.9 million investment in the venture. Before extraordinary charges, Acatos made pre-tax profits of £4.2 million (£4.5 million). A final 1.75p payout makes 3.5p (p) for the year.

BTR lifts stake

BTR has raised its stake in Pilkington from 3.75 to 4.05 per cent, sending the latter's shares up 10p to 182p. Pilkington, which unveiled details of a £140 million joint venture to build Poland's first float glass plant, fought off a £1.2 billion bid from BTR four years ago. Comment, page 23

City Site loss

City Site Estates, the Glasgow property group, has reported a pre-tax loss of £980,000 for the year to September (£7 million profit). Net assets per share fell 26 per cent to 237p. The final dividend rises 20 per cent to 0.96p (0.8p) making a total 1.92p (1.6p). Temps, page 23

Reuters holding

The stake in Reuters Holdings held by The News Corporation, parent company of News International, owner of *The Times*, has fallen by a further 0.29 per cent after the redemption of preference shares issued by the group, which were backed by 1.27 million Reuters shares. News Corp's stake, once more than 10 per cent, had dipped below 2 per cent.

THE POUND

US dollar 1.9315 (-0.0035)
German mark 2.8534 (-0.0187)
Exchange index 93.1 (-0.2)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1707.1 (+12.9)
FT-SE 100 2178.7 (+16.9)
New York Dow Jones 2621.04 (-5.69)*
Tokyo Nikkei Avge 24876.78 (+452.76)
Closing Prices ... Page 25
Major Indices and major changes Page 26

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base: 14%
3-month Interbank: 14.13%*
3-month call: 13.22-13.25%
US: Prime Rate: 10%*
Federal Funds: 7.1%*
3-month Treasury Bills: 6.83-6.82%
30-year bonds: 105.11*-105%*

CURRENCIES

London:	New York:
£ 1.9315	€ 1.9313*
€ DM2.8534	£ DM1.4780*
£ SwFr2.4501	€ SwFr1.2685*
£ FF9.7300	£ FF15.0405*
£ Yen269.01	£ Yen134.05*
£ Denmark Kr. 11.58	£ Denmark Kr. 10.03
£ Denmark Kr. 7.32	£ Denmark Kr. 6.87
France Fr. 10.18	£ France Fr. 9.50
Germany Dm. 2.98	£ Germany Dm. 2.93
Greece Dr. 15.58	£ Greece Dr. 14.78
Hong Kong \$ 1.125	£ Hong Kong \$ 1.055
Italy Lira 2280	£ Italy Lira 2178
Japan Yen 25.50	£ Japan Yen 23.50
Mathematics Gld. 3.165	£ Mathematics Gld. 3.165
Netherlands Kr. 11.76	£ Netherlands Kr. 11.05
Portugal Esc. 264.50	£ Portugal Esc. 249.50
South Africa Rand 5.20	£ South Africa Rand 4.78
Spain Pta. 11.28	£ Spain Pta. 10.80
Sweden Kr. 2.58	£ Sweden Kr. 2.40
Turkey Lira 5600	£ Turkey Lira 5400
USA \$ 2.025	£ USA \$ 1.905
Yugoslavia Dinar 27.52	£ Yugoslavia Dinar 25.00

GOLD

London Fixing: AM \$375.80 pm \$378.90
close \$378.90 -379.40 (£196.00-
196.50)
New York:
Comex \$381.25-381.75*

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Jan.) ... 327.85 bbl (£27.30)
Denotes latest trading price

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Buy	Sale
Australia \$	2.58	2.44
Austria Sch.	21.70	19.70
Belgium Fr.	62.00	52.22
Canada \$	1.125	10.83
Denmark Kr.	11.58	6.87
Finland Mkr.	7.32	5.95
France Fr.	10.18	9.50
Germany Dm.	2.98	2.93
Greece Dr.	15.58	14.78
Hong Kong \$	1.125	1.055
Italy Lira	2280	2178
Japan Yen	25.50	23.50
Mathematics Gld.	3.165	3.165
Netherlands Kr.	11.76	11.05
Portugal Esc.	264.50	249.50
South Africa Rand	5.20	4.78
Spain Pta.	11.28	10.80
Sweden Kr.	2.58	2.40
Turkey Lira	5600	5400
USA \$	2.025	1.905
Yugoslavia Dinar	27.52	25.00

Rates for small denominations back only as quoted by Barclays Bank Plc. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques.
Retail Price Index: 130.3 (October)

GDP fall of 1.2% worst for ten years

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE economy suffered its fastest decline for a decade during the third quarter, with the gross domestic product shrinking 1.2 per cent from the previous quarter, government figures show.

While the GDP data confirmed the start of the recession, a Central Statistical Office survey of manufacturers' intentions pointed to industry cutting investment 7 per cent next year after paring it 3 per cent this year, underpinning the counter-inflationary squeeze.

The fall in investment from last year's record level was the biggest since the mid-Eighties.

The worsening investment picture reflects how badly industry has been affected, with demand slowing and profits contracting. The sharp rise in unemployment last month signalled industry's growing distress and attempts to make urgent adjustment.

Companies' gross trading profits shrank 6.5 per cent in the third quarter to stand 3.1 per cent below the same period last year.

With all the pointers showing that the economy has

slowed further this quarter, the question worrying government and City alike is how severe the recession will be.

Glenn Davies, chief economist at Credit Lyonnais, saw cause for concern in falling investment and rising jobless. Compared with the last recession in the early Eighties, when cutbacks made sense, circumstances now were different. "Now the industrial base is much smaller, where can you afford to cut?"

Gerard Lyons, chief economist at DKB International, expressed concern that the economy was starting to look like a "repeat performance of the early Eighties".

The GDP deflator, widely regarded as the best gauge of domestically generated inflation, rose 2 per cent in the third quarter for an annual gain of 9 per cent, broadly in line with other inflation measures.

Consumers' expenditure fell 0.6 per cent in the third quarter, with total spending down 2.5 per cent on durable goods, down 1.1 per cent on cars, and down 5.5 per cent on furniture and flooring.

The manufacturers' investment intentions showed industry expecting a 9 per cent fall in direct expenditure next year, while spending on leased assets could rise 9 per cent.

Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Brothers, said collapsing investment was likely to make the recession "longer and deeper" than the Treasury expected.

Stocks fell by about £200 million in the third quarter, after a fall of £100 million the previous quarter, disappointing those forecasters who expected large-scale destocking as the economic conditions deteriorated.

In a sign that America's economy was stumbling this summer toward a widely perceived current recession, the Commerce Department reported that GNP grew at 1.4 per cent annual rate in the third quarter (Susan Ellicott writes from Washington).

The department's second and final revision of the country's total output of goods and services between July and September showed a drop from the 1.7 per cent growth rate estimated a month earlier.

Sterling at six month low against the mark

By ANATOLE KALETSKY, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE pound fell to its lowest level for six months against the mark and sterling market rates eased to below 7½ to 7 per cent yesterday.

The sharp fall in sterling, which declined by almost two pence to DM2.8535, partly reflected the generalised strength of the mark, which rose against all main currencies after the cut in the American discount rate on Tuesday. The yen and the franc both fell against the mark, almost as sharply as

sterling. The Federal Reserve's discount rate decision was followed yesterday by money market operations in New

York that confirmed that the Fed's new target for Federal Funds had fallen from 7½ to 7 per cent yesterday.

Another important factor moving the markets was the belief that British interest rates might be cut in the not too distant future even if the pound remained in the lower half of the European exchange-rate mechanism.

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Bonn concern over repeat of Soviet payment problems

By WOLFGANG MUNCHAU, EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

PAYOUT delays by Soviet and other East European exporters are expected to resurface next year, as the foreign trade organisations run out of hard currency and the countries of the region are plunged into deep economic recession.

Government sources in Bonn are particularly worried about a recurrence of Soviet

payment problems, which surfaced early in the year and reached their height in the summer.

A five billion mark German government loan guarantee, given by Chancellor Helmut Kohl during his visit to the Soviet Union this summer for the repayment of existing debt, has been used up. The guarantees were deemed nec-

essary to maintain the flow of trade between the two countries, as numerous medium-sized German companies were threatened with bankruptcy because of the payment difficulties, and larger companies were threatening to stop trading with the Soviets.

The German government can ill-afford to pledge another such guarantee, as fears are growing that the payment problems will return, probably even more strongly, given the difficult state of the Soviet economy.

Germany is particularly affected because of its position as the Soviet Union's largest Western trading partner. The government fears an explosion in liabilities of the Hermes export credit insurance, the government-backed exporters' insurance scheme.

Hermes faces a deficit of DM5 billion, its highest, and is likely to clamp down on new export credit guarantees except those for specific projects. In a recent report, Hermes gave warning that the Soviet foreign trade organisations would find it increasingly difficult to meet their obligations. If Hermes were to stop backing new trade ventures, this could lead to the abrupt collapse in German-Soviet trade, which totalled DM11.5 billion last year.

There were also suggestions of problems at FSM's two joint ventures with Berisford, one in Edinburgh and another in west London. "The joint ventures with Berisford are perfectly under control," said Mr Sellar.

Mr Sellar said that gearing, which currently stood at around 130 per cent would drop to 100 per cent by April. The company's interim results are due in January.

FSM shares are 'bear raided'

By MATTHEW BOND

SHARES in Ford Seller Morris (FSM), the highly geared property company, lost almost half their value before an announcement from the company - stating that it knew of no reason for the fall - prompted a recovery.

Having fallen from 51p to 42p on Monday and Tuesday, the shares plunged almost 20p to a middle price of 22.5p at one point, as rumours spread of problems affecting some of the company's joint ventures.

A statement from chairman Irvine Sellars said there was "no substance in these rumours". Mr Sellars said: "We have been bear raided. The rumours were wide of the mark and very stupid." The shares finished 5p lower at 37p.

One story suggested a link with the Point West residents.

Wasserstein picks Levene for UK

By JONATHAN PRYNN

WASSERSTEIN Perella, the Wall Street mergers and acquisitions adviser best known in Britain for its involvement in the Gateway bid battle, has appointed Sir Peter Levene, a senior civil servant, as its deputy chairman in Britain.

Sir Peter, aged 49, will be leaving his present position as chief of defence procurement at the Ministry of Defence to take up the post next year. Between 1981 and 1985 he was chairman of United Scientific Holdings, the defence group.

Bruce Wasserstein, president and chief executive officer of Wasserstein Perella, said: "Sir Peter's successful experience with British industry and government brings an added dimension to our capability to provide sophisticated advice."

Sir Peter said that having run a defence company for 20 years, he was looking for a new challenge that could make use of his accumulated experience. "Not many merchant bankers have run a business. Even fewer have also been a permanent secretary," he said.

Sir Peter has served in his present position since 1985 and has been widely credited



Levene: new challenge

with the introduction of tough, commercial, fixed price procurement standards to the Ministry of Defence.

His appointment marks an important development in Wasserstein's European strategy. The firm has 50 staff in Britain, though senior posts were previously held by Americans. It has had a high profile in the top end of the British mergers and acquisitions market in the past two years.

In May it led a management consortium formed to acquire the Yardley-Lenther cosmetic business from Smith-Kline Beecham. It also has a 20 per cent stake in Isoscales, the buy-in vehicle which owns the Gateway chain.

The expected explosion of deficits in the Hermes insurance scheme will further strain the German budget deficit, estimated to top DM150 billion next year, about 5 per cent of GNP. But almost every week the government has faced unexpected costs, mostly relating to the reconstruction of the eastern German regions. Tax rises or other revenue-boosting measures, such as the introduction of a DM100 autobahn user fee, are being considered to meet at least some of the shortfall.

Under the agreement Digital Equipment will hold a 65 per cent stake in the new company, Digital-Kienzle Computersysteme, with effect from January 1, with Man-

nnesmann retaining a 35 per cent holding. Kienzle came into the Mannesmann group in 1981.

Kienzle is based in Villingen, a small town in the south-west of Germany, and the new company will continue to operate from there.

The terms of the deal were not disclosed.

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Kienzle is based in Villingen, a small town in the south-west of Germany, and the new company will continue to operate from there.

The deal came after a long search by Mannesmann for a partner for its troubled data systems division, which made a net profit of only DM3.5 million last year, on turnover of almost DM1 billion. The

deal will be approved by the Bundeskartellamt, the monopolies watchdog.

The sale is unlikely to meet with any objections, given the already concentrated state of the industry.

Mannesmann disposal

By OUR EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

THE consolidation of Europe's computer industry has taken another turn with Mannesmann, the German engineering group, selling its Kienzle data systems subsidiary to Digital Equipment Corporation. The deal came after a long search by Mannesmann for a partner for its troubled data systems division, which made a net profit of only DM3.5 million last year, on turnover of almost DM1 billion. The

sale of Kienzle amounts to another consolidation in the German computer industry, after Nixdorf, once the rising star, was sold to Siemens, which is now the largest computer manufacturer in Europe.

The deal will need to be approved by the Bundeskartellamt, the monopolies watchdog.

The sale is unlikely to meet with any objections, given the already concentrated state of the industry.

Cabra sinks to £5.2m losses at half time

By OUR CITY STAFF

CABRA Estates, which owns the football grounds occupied by Chelsea and Fulham football clubs, has reported a pre-tax loss of £5.2 million for the six months to September. In the nine months to September 1989, the company made a pre-tax profit of £4 million.

The losses include a £1.5 million write-down in the value of the trading properties. An interim dividend of 0.1p (1.25p) is being paid.

John Duggan, the chairman, said: "The property market is

Lilley refers Morgan Crucible purchase

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

CONCERN about the British market for ceramic fibres, which are used as a heat insulator in high temperature applications, has prompted Peter Lilley, the industry secretary, to refer an acquisition by Morgan Crucible to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Morgan Crucible, the industrial materials and electronics group, paid £81.4 million for a package of businesses owned by Manville International in June.

Bruce Farmer, managing

director of Morgan Crucible, said the reference was a "total surprise". It was made on the advice of Sir Gordon Borrie, director general of fair trading.

Dr Farmer said the Manville businesses sold about £2 million a year of fibres manufactured in Europe into Britain. Those sales, added to Morgan's British made UK sales, might give his company a market share in ceramic fibres of about 30 per cent.

The commission has been asked to report by April 17.

Harrison falls to £422,000

By OUR CITY STAFF

SCOTLAND will soon move into the recession gripping the rest of the United Kingdom, economists predict.

The Fraser of Allander Institute said that the Scottish economy had so far survived the slump affecting the South.

Growth in Scottish production was nearly five times that of the UK in the first half of 1990; consumer spending more buoyant; and the jobless total fell for seven months after it began to rise elsewhere.

The Scottish building industry had now gone into sharp decline; businessmen were more gloomy; and export markets had slackened.

Jim Love, editor of the institute's *Quarterly Economic Commentary*, said: "We can expect to see signs in the early part of 1991 that Scotland will start to move more into line with the performance of the UK economy as a whole."

Guidance for auditors

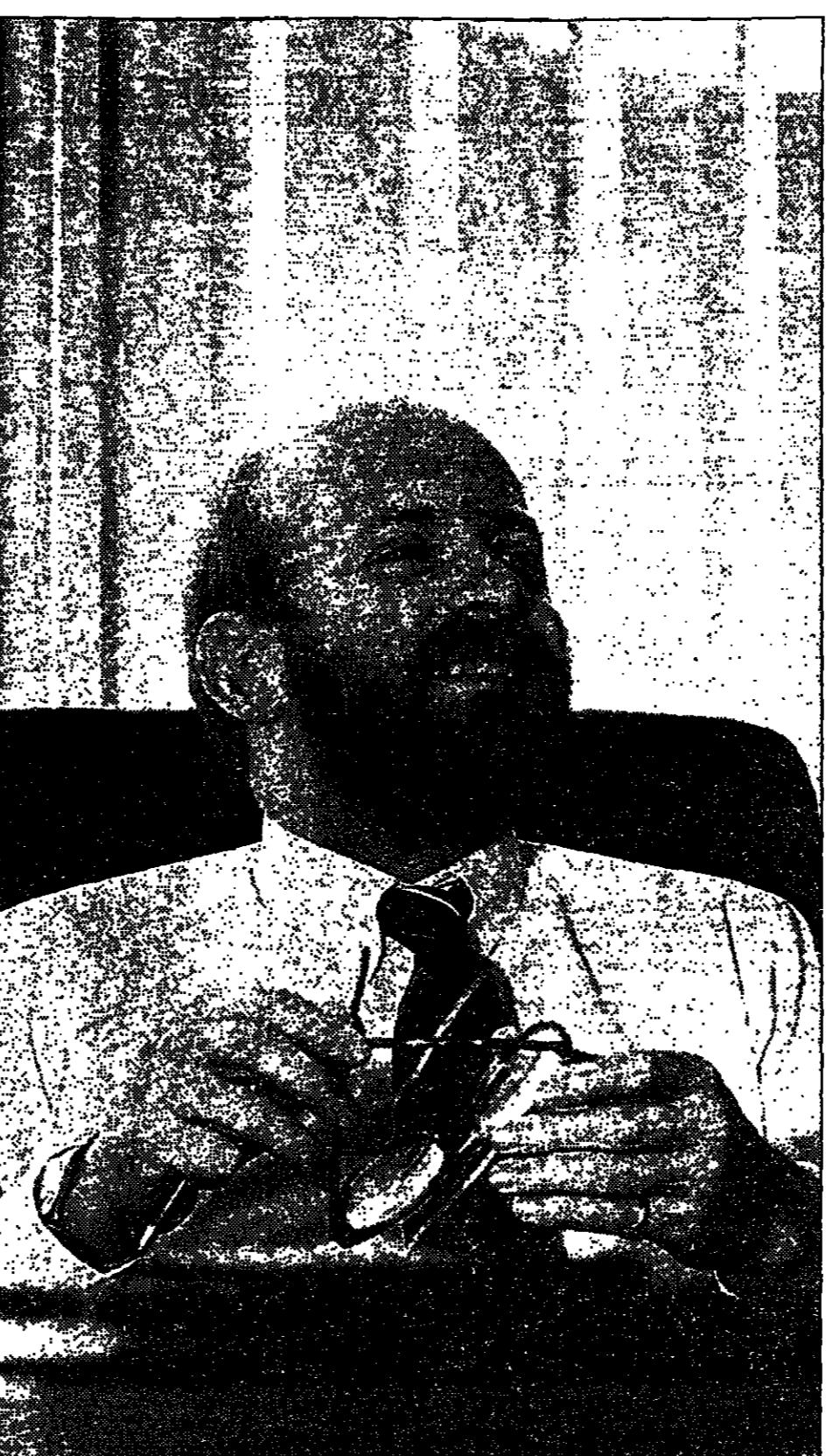
THE Auditing Practices Committee of the accountancy institutes has drawn up a detailed practice note for auditors of investment businesses.

The guidance note is intended to ensure that businesses comply with the detailed rules drawn up under the Financial Services Act.

The note is aimed especially at smaller firms of auditors that do not specialise in financial businesses.

The note seeks to enforce rules on separating funds or share certificates held on behalf of clients from other assets through internal controls and accounting systems.

USH back in the black



Executive post: Nicholas Prest, appointed chief executive since the bid, yesterday

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

GM Firth (Holdings) cuts interim dividend

GM FIRTH (Holdings), which has interests in steel and furnishing and flooring concerns, is cutting its interim dividend from 2.25p to 1p a share following a swing from a previous £2.03 million pre-tax profit to a £289,000 pre-tax loss for the six months ended September.

The company says that, although its core activities performed well, the overall loss was the result of an unsuccessful expansion into engineering steels and machine tools in the Southeast, and high interest rates. The interest charge at half-time was £1.07 million compared with £698,000, which more than cancelled out the interim trading profits of £965,000, compared with £2.8 million. Ian Wasserman, chairman, says he is hopeful that the worst is over. The shares fell 4p to 24p.

Scaffolding group's loss

BRITISH Building and Engineering Appliances, the scaffolding group, blamed the industry downturn and high interest rates for pre-tax losses of £115,000 in the six months to end-September against profits of £277,000 last time. For the second year running, the interim dividend is halved, to 0.5p per share from 1.84p to 0.48p. There is again no interim dividend.

Interim slide at Ball

AH BALL, the water pipeline contractor, has confirmed the profits warning issued in October with a 38 per cent slide to £376,000 in interim pre-tax profits to end-September. Turnover was reduced by 17.6 per cent to £2.4 million and the gross profits margin slimmed from 33 per cent to 29.2 per cent. Earnings per share fell from 6.3p to 3.7p.

However, the company announced two new orders from Southern Water Services and Portsmouth Water worth a total of £1.85 million. These contracts "should ensure no further deterioration in the next six to nine months". The interim dividend is held at 2.2p.

Profits slump at West Trust

WEST Trust, the specialist textiles group, saw pre-tax profits slump from £445,000 to £191,000 in the six months to end-September as low levels of trade continued in the textile industry. But the interim dividend is held at 0.25p. West normally generates more profits in the second half than in the first and the board still expects this in the current year.

First electricity ruling

THE director general of electricity supply has made his first ruling in a dispute between a company and a domestic customer and has stressed that disconnection should be the industry's last resort.

Professor Stephen Littlechild was asked to rule on whether the unnamed company could require the customer to install a prepayment meter outside his house, pay outstanding charges of £1,084 and provide £400 as security against future bills. Professor Littlechild agreed to the installation of a meter but found that only £360 of the outstanding charges should be paid. He refused the demand for a deposit.

Recession looms for Scotland

By OUR CITY STAFF

SCOTLAND will soon move into the recession gripping the rest of the United Kingdom, economists predict.

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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

UNLISTED SECURITIES

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

THIRD MARKET

CONCLUDING POINTS

LONDON FOX		LONDON METAL EXCHANGE		
		Official prices/volume previous day		Rudolf Wolff
	AMT Futures	Cash	3 month	Vol
COCOA	Sep 751-750	Copper Gde A	1280.0-1281.0	1287.0-1288.0
Dec 800-805	Oct 781-778	Zinc Spec Hr*	321.50-314.50	327.50-328.00
Mar 850-855	Mar 800-805	Tin*	1250.0-1251.0	1261.0-1262.0
May 894-893	Voi 8774	Aluminium Hr*	5635-5640	5735-5740
Jul 723-722	Nov 825-826	Nickel*	1530.0-1531.0	1561.0-1562.0
COPFEE	AMT Futures	1820.0-1830.0	1820.0-1827.50	630000
Jan 604-603	Sep 626-625	1 (Cents per Troy oz.)	(3 per tonne)	20262
Mar 577-578	Nov 625-620			
May 582-580	Jan 640-630			
Jul 580-585	Voi 2258			
SUGAR	C Cane sugar			
FOB	Vet 1079			
Mar 215.8-216.8	Oct 221.8-219.0			
May 216.2-218.0	Dec 220.0-210.0			
Aug 222.0-220.0	Mar 220.8-22.0			
LONDON GRAIN FUTURES				
WHEAT close (2/yr)	Voi 28	Bid	Offer	
Ja 119.20	My 122.70	70 My 126.30		
Jn 127.80	Sq 106.50	Nt 111.20		
BARLEY close (2/yr)	Voi 145			
Ja 114.00	My 118.40	40 My 120.00		
Sq 106.10	10.10 Ja 112.60			
HI-PRO SOYABEAN	Voi 65			
Feb 118.5-117.5	Aug 122.5-21.0			
LONDON MEAT FUTURES (kg)				
Live Pig	Voi: 28			
Mth	Open	Close		
Jan	unq	90.0		
MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION				
Av'rege livestock prices at representative markets on December 19				
(Up/lnr)		Pig	Sheep	Cattle
Gg (p)		77.24	137.57	105.79
GB (-/-)		+1.46	-6.14	-2.47
Eng/Wal (*%)		-18.5	-26.7	-31.9
Eng/Wal (p)		77.24	140.92	105.77
Eng/Wal (-/-)		+1.46	-6.14	-2.47
Scotland (*%)		n/a	-39.8	-67.7
Scotland (p)		n/a	128.26	105.92

مكتبة من الأنصار

Portfolio

PLATINUM

From your Portfolio Platinum card check your cash share movements on this page only. Add them up give you overall total and check this against the daily dividend figure. If it matches you have won outright or a share of the daily prize money stated. If you win, follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No.	Company	Group	Gross	Vid	% Pct
11	Racecar Devt	Building Roads			
21	Fletcher Kent	Property			
31	Sou' West (as)	Breweries			
41	TSB (as)	Banks, Discount			
51	Nat West (as)	Banks, Discount			
61	Kingsbridge (as)	Drapery Stores			
71	Honda Motor	Motors, Aircraft			
81	Allied Teal	Textiles			
91	Delta	Electronics			
101	RAT (as)	Tobaccos			
111	Yorkshire Chem	Chemicals, Plas			
121	Emmerson Units	Transport			
131	Laporte (as)	Chemicals, Plas			
141	Oxford Instruments	Electronics			
151	De La Rue	Industrials A-D			
161	Gr Portak	Property			
171	Hickson	Chemicals, Plas			
181	Guinness (as)	Breweries			
191	Treasury Pl (as)	Hotels, Cafeterias			
201	Broken Hall	Industrials A-D			
211	Union Disc	Banks, Discount			
221	Harrison Crossland (as)	Industrials E-H			
231	Adress	Industrials A-D			
241	Locis	Electronics			
251	McKeehan	Industrials E-H			
261	Ocean Group	Transport			
271	Nu-Synth	Industrials E-H			
281	Stobart Estates (as)	Property			
291	Security Serv	Industrials S-Z			
301	Barlow Rand	Industrials A-D			
311	Lucas (as)	Motors, Aircraft			
321	Spyerstrand	Property			
331	Sears (as)	Drapery, Stores			
341	PB's Int (as)	Building Roads			
351	Aerospace Eng	Industrials A-D			
361	Brown (N)	Drapery, Stores			
371	General Motor	Motors, Aircraft			
381	Smithfield Beach (as)	Industrials E-Z			
391	Stobart Estates	Drapery, Stores			
401	Smith W.H.A. (as)	Drapery, Stores			
411	Land Sec (as)	Property			
421	Hawker Siddeley (as)	Industrials E-H			
431	SA Breweries (as)	Breweries			
441	Sainsbury J (as)	Foods			
451	The Times Newspapers Ltd.	Daily Team			

Please take into account any minus signs

Weekly Dividend					
Please make a note of your daily totals for the weekly dividend of £4,000 in Saturday's newspaper.					
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

There were no valid claims for the Portfolio Platinum prize yesterday. The £2,000 will be added to today's competition.

BRITISH FUNDS

1990
High Low Stock
Price Change % Pct

SHORTS (Under Five Years)

924	SDA	Each	2%	1950	84%	-	40	10,714
925	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
926	SDA	Trust	3%	1950-80	95%	..	0.00	0.000
927	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
928	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
929	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
930	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
931	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
932	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
933	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
934	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
935	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
936	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
937	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
938	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
939	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
940	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
941	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
942	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
943	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
944	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
945	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
946	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
947	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
948	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
949	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
950	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
951	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
952	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
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956	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
957	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
958	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
959	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
960	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
961	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
962	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
963	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
964	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
965	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
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967	SDA	Trust	3%	1950	95%	..	0.00	0.000
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9 Dec 1990

GENERAL APPOINTMENTS

50 من الأصل

c. £50,000 + benefits

Publishing

London

Group Business Development Manager

Prominent, highly successful and well resourced business publisher with a range of market leading titles, seeks a talented marketing professional to develop and drive its UK and European expansion programme. A new high profile position working with the Board and established European partners. Excellent career prospects.

THE ROLE

- Maximising profit and market position in recruitment and display advertising and circulation through creative and innovative use of marketing data.
- Developing a cohesive Group marketing and public relations plan.
- Working with Board to develop long term strategy. Identifying new business opportunities including joint ventures and acquisitions.

London 071-973 0889
Manchester 061-941 3818

Selector Europe

A Spencer Stuart Company

Please reply, enclosing full details to:
Selector Europe, Ref S221201,
16 Connaught Place,
London, W2 2ED.

UK SALES MANAGER

Widely-used capital equipment

West of Scotland base

c.£40,000 + bonus + car

A EUROPEAN AND WORLD LEADER in its particular sector, this established British-owned company is continuing to expand at a rapid pace. Its products are widely in demand by industry, commerce, petrochemical, construction and leisure sectors.

Planning for the future has created a new and unusual opportunity for a Manager who, reporting to the MD, will take overall charge of all UK sales and servicing, with a staff of around 75. You'll take a strategic view of business prospects, seeking out new sales opportunities,

develop further the existing business and become involved in new acquisitions. A priority will be the ongoing development of the sales/service team.

Probably a qualified engineer aged 35+, you must be a highly commercial mature executive with a successful management track record in capital equipment sales or hire. A keen sense of financial awareness is a prerequisite.

Salary is negotiable around £40,000 + bonus + car together with the range of benefits expected at this level and excellent career development opportunities.

Please send full career details, quoting Ref: G2060/ST, to Steve Higgins, PA Consulting Group, Advertising and Communications, Number Two Blythswood Square, Glasgow G2 4AD. All replies will be forwarded to our client. Please list separately any companies to which they should not be sent.

PA Consulting Group

HUMAN RESOURCES

Creating Business Advantage

Executive Recruitment - Human Resource Consultancy - Advertising and Communications

Administrative Services Manager

CEL
COLLECTIVE ENTERPRISES LIMITED

£17,500 - 20,000 k + Car + Profit Share

CEL is a rapidly expanding management services company delivering consultancy, research, training and project management across a wide range of business disciplines. Our client base is national, ranging from Charities through Local Authorities to International Financial Institutions, but is mainly concentrated in the "Not for Profit" sector. We are located between Manchester and Sheffield in the Peak District National Park.

The Administrative Services Manager will run our computer based service to Clients. These currently include complex database management, payment processing through BACS and mail order sales administration. She will also contribute to the development and sale of new computer based services. The post carries Department Manager status and membership of the Company's 6 person management team.

The person we are looking for will have a degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline (ideally applied computing). She will have at least two years experience of management in an information technology environment. She will be able to demonstrate a flair for job analysis and implementation of computer solutions coupled with a methodical approach to data processing. Experience of people management is desirable. Above all she will want to contribute to the growth of a young and dynamic business.

For an application form and details write to:

Collective Enterprise Limited, Bleaklow House,
Mill Street, Glossop SK13 8PT

or ring Julie Atherton on:

Glossop (04574) 68063

Deadline for completed applications - 2nd Jan 1991

We hope to interview in mid January.

CEL aims to be an equal opportunities employer.

GENERAL MANAGER

(Nell Gwynn House, Chelsea)

required for this luxury block of flats.

To be responsible for administrative and accounting staff, letting office staff, portage, services, and to promote luxury letting service.

Salary £25,000 + pension + car + BUPA + incentive bonus.

Previous experience in property management preferred.

Apply in writing to Managing Director of the Maintenance Trustees, Fineman Lever, 74 Seymour Place, London W1H 5DB

PERSONAL ASSISTANT - SAUDI ARABIA

A Saudi Businessman with international connections is seeking a male* graduate in his mid-30's as his Personal Assistant Secretary. This is a demanding position requiring flexibility and the freedom to travel extensively. The successful applicant will have a sound educational background, impeccable references and proven first-class secretarial skills including excellent organisational ability. In addition to English he will be fluent in at least French or German and preferably both languages. Experience of the Middle East would be an advantage. The post is based in Jeddah on a bachelor basis, but there would be frequent and extensive worldwide travel. The employment package will reflect the demanding nature of the position.

Applications together with a comprehensive C.V., a recent photograph and the names of at least two referees.

Please reply to Box No: 2328

*As exempt under Section 10 of the SDA.

DUTCH CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANTS B.V.

D.C.C.B.V. are looking for personnel in engineering & design work for an oil and gas plant in the Middle East, onshore and offshore.

For this project we require resumes of suitably qualified engineering staff.

The locations are:

1. In the Netherlands

2. Long term in the Middle East

PERSONNEL REQUIRED

Project Manager
Project Engineer
Construction Engineer
Construction Supervisor
Contract Administrator
Senior Mechanical Engineer
Mechanical Engineer
Senior Rotating Equipment Engineer
Rotating Equipment Engineer
Senior Process Engineer
Process Engineer
Loss Prevention Engineer
Senior Electrical Engineer
Electrical Engineer
Senior Control Engineer
Control Engineer
Piping Engineer
Senior Material Control Engineer
Senior Engineering Draughtsman
Technics Cert
(Engineering Records)
Engineering Record Administrator

Should you be interested please send us via fax a copy of your resume as soon as possible.
DUTCH CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANTS
Pottenlaan 5
2288 EE RUSWIK
THE NETHERLANDS
TELEFAX NO. 070-3991501

Is your Career at a Crossroads?

If you're looking for a new career direction and don't know which way to turn - look to Chusid Lander. For over 30 years we've been helping professional men and women, earning £20k plus, to improve their career prospects and get better jobs. So whether you're unemployed, facing redundancy or stuck in that rut - call us to arrange an early confidential appointment with no obligation, or send us your c.v. (24 hr answerphone in all offices).

LONDON 071-381 6711 CHIPPENHAM 01249 62770 MANCHESTER 061-228 0069 LEEDS 0532 425102 GLASGOW 041-322 5522 EDINBURGH 031-425 1280 REDDITCH 082 512586 LUGGROOUGH 01691 01256

© CHUSID LANDER 35/37 Fitzroy Street, London W1P 5AF

c. £45,000 + benefits

Luxury Branded Goods

London

Merchandising Director

Respected international group with enviable heritage, renowned brand names and acknowledged market strength requires an exceptional merchandising specialist to position its premier brand as a world leader of prestige knitwear, clothing and accessories. First class opportunities for career development and promotion.

THE ROLE

- Establish the signature and distinctive style of the brand.
- Coordinate and control the in-house design, styling, external sourcing and range development. Lead and inspire a team which sets uncompromising quality standards.
- Work closely with sales and marketing, developing effective international marketing and promotional support to achieve exclusive positioning.

London 071-973 0889
Manchester 061-941 3818

Selector Europe

A Spencer Stuart Company

Please reply, enclosing full details to:
Selector Europe, Ref S221201,
16 Connaught Place,
London, W2 2ED.

Formed in 1971

A world-leader in high-technology market research

Offices in Denham, Munich, Paris, San Jose, Tokyo and Seoul

World-wide client base

■ Services
Market Research
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Survey and Database Initiatives
■ Applications Development
■ Manufacturing and Assembly Services
■ Industrial Components
■ Electronic Components
■ Industrial Components

COMPUTER INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS WHAT NEXT?

INDUSTRY ANALYST

The continued growth of our Computer Industry Group has led to several challenging and rewarding career opportunities for Industry Analysts, based at our UK office in Denham, Middlesex.

You will be working with a team of respected professionals who, through a variety of research methods and incisive analysis, deliver to clients world-wide a highly regarded and influential third-party perspective of the fast-moving and changing European computer industry and market.

An IT industry professional, you already have an in-depth understanding of the market, particularly PCs, gained through relevant, quality experience in product marketing or product development. This is complemented by well-developed analytical ability, plus clear, concise written and oral communication skills. Your contribution, either as an individual or as part of the team, will cover all areas of the

Group's output - from newsletters and research reports to client enquiries and presentations. Furthermore you are able to operate successfully at the highest levels, establishing yourself as a key industry information source. Fluency or a working knowledge of a second European language would be an advantage.

For the right people, the rewards are excellent and include an attractive salary, car, large company benefits, and relocation where appropriate. Plus for those with ambition, outstanding opportunities for career development.

In the first instance, please send a comprehensive CV, including current salary details to, Tony Tyler, European Human Resources and Administration Manager, Dataquest Europe Limited, Russell House, Brookwater Park, Denham, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB9 5HP.

Applications must be received by 2nd January 1991.

Dataquest
A company of
the Data & Business Corporation

For a significant, private, wholesaler of electrical and related security products with outlets throughout the UK, a steady growth record and a medium term objective of mainland European development.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Electrical Wholesaling

c. £40,000

QMS Recruitment

HUE
FASHION LEGWEAR
U.K. GENERAL MANAGER

HUE is recognised as America's leading fashion legwear company. HUE, which is renowned for its creativity and ability to interpret fashion trends, sells to most of the better retailers in the U.S.A. and Canada.

Following a successful U.K. market study, HUE is now in the process of setting up a subsidiary here. We need a General Manager, ideally with start-up experience, to take charge of the U.K. company.

The successful candidate must have extensive fashion experience working, at a senior level, with the better retailers. A legwear, or accessory background would be useful.

It is possible that this position could be expanded to President HUE International, if the successful candidate has relevant international experience.

The salary and employment package will be appropriate for the position and subject to individual negotiation.

Also, independent agents are invited to contact us to discuss possible associations.

Please reply to HUE's U.K. Consultants:



Frank Friend,
FRANK FRIEND ASSOCIATES,
Télévision House, Mount Street,
Manchester M2 5WS.

SHIP MANAGER (TECHNICAL) BIBBY LINE LTD

A vacancy exists for a Ship Manager (Technical) or Assistant Ship Manager (Technical), according to experience, within the Shipping Division of Bibby Line Limited, based at our modern office location in Liverpool.

The successful candidate will preferably be aged 30-40, qualified to at least DTP Class One Motor, with past experience as Chief Engineer on LPG/Chemical/Product vessels, and willing to develop a career in all aspects of ship operation/technical management. Experience in modern ship management and computer practices would be an advantage.

Initial salary negotiable. Benefits package includes a car, contributory pension scheme, Private Patients Plan relocation assistance as appropriate.

Apply in writing with c.v. to:
Mr P.G.W. Vickers, Technical Manager
Bibby Line Limited
Norwich House, Water Street,
Liverpool L2 8UW

HIGH CLASS INDIAN RESTAURANT

London, Epsom, Bushey, Milton Keynes, Kings Langley.

We are looking for an experienced curry chef & tandoori chef.

All written applications to Box No 2337

Times Newspapers
PO Box 484
1 Virginia Street
London E1 9DD

GENERAL APPOINTMENTS

NATIONAL SALES MANAGER - Voice Systems

*In the world of high-value systems
High-calibre leadership is priceless*

BASED: SOUTH EAST

£60,000 PACKAGE

EXECUTIVE CAR

Highly regarded throughout world markets, our multi-billion client is acknowledged as one of the major players in the communications arena. Their continued success has now created a unique opportunity for an individual of the highest calibre.

As National Sales Manager, you will report directly to the MD and join a small select team responsible for the strategic direction and success of the sales operation within business systems. Naturally, the brief is broad and encompasses all aspects of defining, developing and implementing the national sales strategy in addition to managing and motivating a large Sales Force and its managers.

Of paramount importance is your ability to meet the challenges of this appointment with confidence. To do this, you will need sound general management experience coupled with a background in sales management. This is likely to be combined with a knowledge in voice systems and a broad, up to date understanding of networking.

This is a genuine opportunity to further your career in a corporate environment. Age is no barrier for those with obvious senior-level credibility, but it is unlikely that anyone under 40 will have the necessary experience. An excellent basic salary and generous commission structure is complemented by an extensive range of valuable benefits including executive car and family BUPA.

To apply please write with full cv to Richard Lloyd, quoting reference 11/10 at: Richard Lloyd & Associates, 35 Carston Grove, Fords Farm, Calcot, Reading RG3 5ZN.

RICHARD LLOYD & Associates
A Search Selection Consultancy
Tel: 0734 415161 Fax: 0734 411088



GLOBAL STRATEGIST **Technology Standards**

Reading Base

Founded in 1984 to promote and support the open systems movement, X/Open is an international and industry-wide organisation sponsored by most of the world's largest computer systems manufacturers. Its mission is to facilitate and manage the integration of standards in order that users and vendors alike can reap the full rewards that true open systems promise to deliver. It does this by adopting and adapting existing de jure and de facto standards and forming them into a comprehensive and cohesive set known as the Common Applications Environment or CAE. Details of the CAE are published by X/Open in the form of Portability Guides. So successful has been the adoption by major systems manufacturers of X/Open's guidelines, that they are now recognised as official procurement policy by key European governments and multinational corporations worldwide.

Your role will be to develop and implement a strategy that will enable X/Open to effectively coordinate its programmes with the activities of de jure standards organisations on a worldwide basis. As the principle interface between X/Open and national standards bodies

Package c £60,000

this will involve you in establishing formal working relationships with individual members of organisations such as EWOS, ISO and IEEE. This is to ensure that X/Open's activities are fully understood and in particular, that they converge with the wide range of emerging standards being developed by these bodies.

With a minimum of three years in-depth involvement in the formulation of open systems standards, ideally gained with a major IT vendor, you will offer considerable experience of working with national standards bodies and should have a strong understanding of X/Open's role in this process. An excellent communicator and presenter, your career is likely to have covered both technical and commercial management functions on an international basis. This is a high profile role right at the forefront of the open systems debate. As such it will demand an individual with exceptional drive and ability.

Contact Simon Whan on +44(0) 81 852 8822 during evenings and weekends or on +44 (0) 923 855515 during office hours. Alternatively write to him at Goodman Graham & Associates, quoting Ref 900, at 8 Beaumont Gate, Beaumont Hill, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 7AR UK. Fax +44 (0) 923 854791.

x/Open®

QUALITY MANAGER WITH VISION

c.£25,000 + Car and Benefits

North of England

Our client is seeking a Quality Manager to drive their Quality Initiatives through the 1990s and beyond.

A major international manufacturer of automotive components requires a charismatic Quality leader able to achieve results through others.

Suitable candidates will be of graduate calibre (Engineering or Physical Science).

Experience — extensive experience in automotive industry

- Quality Management

Knowledge — Quality Systems: ISO 9001/BS5750, Ford Q101, Rover ARG 100

- Quality Management tools and techniques

Skills

- communication

- decision making

- coaching/training

- team building

The successful candidate will be a good organiser, have a 'hands-on' management approach and be prepared to travel worldwide. If you believe you are ready for a new challenge please write, enclosing a copy of your CV, to:

Cathy Thornber, Bywater plc, 119 Guildford Street, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9AL.

Bywater

SALES EXECUTIVES

OTE £60k + CAR

Systems & Application Software

Our clients, Apocore International, part of a \$200m International group, are market leaders in the supply of software products aimed at the PICK and UNIX operating environments. Their products are used in a wide range of applications to operate industrial processes and a wide range of hardware and software packages. They have recently released an exceptionally flexible range of accounting packages which make use of the power of relational data-base techniques to allow rapid system customisation and integration into existing systems. They are seeking to strengthen their sales team by recruiting two additional sales executives — one to win new business with end-users and one to develop sales to VARs and OEMs.

WHAT THE POSITION OFFERS YOU

Earnings of up to £60k pa plus a realistic target, a competitive basic salary; a fully expensed car and other valuable benefits.

The opportunity to join a market leader with an international reputation for technical excellence and excellence.

The chance to sell a wide range of software products, which satisfy an extensive market need from systems houses and end-users, and for a cost-effective migration path to an Open Environment from their existing systems.

An exceptional level of marketing, technical and training support to help you win the business and a challenging working environment and key member of a small team of professionals, motivated managers.

The opportunity to work closely with end-users or systems houses in shaping their IT strategy for the 1990s and beyond.

For a confidential discussion on these outstanding opportunities, call Peter Yellor on 0785 855370 (ansafone)

— Fax 0785 855054 or write to European Personnel Consultants, The Wharf, Brampton, Northants NN11 7AD.

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For success and satisfaction at any age, you need to identify jobs which best match your interests, abilities and personality. Consult the experts. Free brochure.

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50 Gloucester Place, WC1, Telephone 071-935 5452 (24 hr).

Director... but needing a job

By working together we have total commitment to finding you the right job.

Our methods of introduction lead to hundreds of opportunities at senior level from City of opportunities through a wide range of industries £40-+++. Flexible Government loan available to assist you with start to finish.

Call us on 071-488 1324 to learn how we can help you help yourself.

Management Career
Consultants,
41 Tower Hill,
London EC3N 4HA

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International Banking and
Financial Services Group

ENGINEERING APPOINTMENTS

Manager/Assistant Manager

Person with business background, preferably construction, required by recently established, expanding Japanese construction and engineering company.

Ideal applicants should have experience of at least two years relevant experience. The staff office has an expanding and varied workload and requires an ambitious person who is able to use their own initiative.

Starting salary will depend on qualifications and experience.
Apply in writing to:

MAEDA CORPORATION

126 Jersey Street, London, SW1Y 4UA.

ABB is the world's leading electrical engineering group with revenues of \$25 billion and over 220,000 employees in 140 countries.

Sales Managers

We need innovative sales professionals with knowledge of the power industry and capital equipment experience.

You will be responsible for advising on international marketing opportunities, screening projects, establishing sales plans, and for the development and submission of tenders including contract negotiations.

You should have the ability to initiate and develop successful customer relationships, and coordinate the work of different groups in evaluating and responding to their requirements.

For both positions, our international working language is English, but knowledge of German or other main languages would be useful. Both include relocation allowances.

Applicants should send their C.V. in the first instance to:

Mr. Paul Barratt, INTEREUROPE Technical Services Ltd, Overseas Division
6 Wedgewood Court, Stevenage, Herts SG1 4QR, Tel. 0438 745 777.

ABB
ASEA BROWN BOVERI



General Manager

c. £40,000 + Car

Suffolk

possess first class communication ability and be receptive to, and critical of, new ideas and change in an important and exciting time for the Company.

Career opportunities within the Group are excellent and in this context proficiency in either French or German would prove useful.

Interested candidates should write, in confidence, enclosing a detailed curriculum vitae together with salary details and quoting reference JC290 to the Company's advisor Jeff Cottrell, Ernst & Young Corporate Resources, 21 Conduit Street, London W1R 9TB.

ERNST & YOUNG

GENERAL APPOINTMENTS

Public Relations Manager

*City Based,
c £45,000, Car, Benefits*

The Public Relations department of one of the world's largest financial institutions which has its Head Office in London is currently seeking a manager to handle its Retail Banking P.R. activity. As part of the senior management team you will have a major influence on all areas of the department's activity. You will be responsible for all aspects of public relations for the retail and personal sector of the U.K. bank, together with retail developments in Europe.

The job will involve a wide-ranging spectrum of activities including the coordination of personal sector media coverage (in the press, TV and radio), briefing of senior executives within the bank, public affairs liaison and involvement with internal communications. This is very much a proactive role with tremendous scope for new initiatives.

Candidates will ideally have a detailed knowledge of the media gained through a journalistic or TV/Radio background, and will have had extensive P.R. experience, probably in the financial sector. They will possess excellent communication skills and have the presence to work closely with senior executives.

Energy, enthusiasm and good leadership skills are vital, whilst an understanding of business and the personal financial market place would be useful.

This is probably the most exciting P.R. department in the City of London and the potential is almost limitless. For the right individual this position will represent an irresistible opportunity.

Male or female candidates should submit in confidence a comprehensive c.v. or telephone for a Personal History Form to: *J. Jenkins, Hoggett Bowers plc, 12 Frederick Road, Edgbaston, BIRMINGHAM, B15 1JD, 021-455 7575, Fax: 021-454 2338, quoting Ref B23031/ST.*

Hoggett Bowers

BIRMINGHAM, BRISTOL, CAMBRIDGE, CARDIFF, EDINBURGH, GLASGOW, LEEDS, LONDON, MANCHESTER, NEWCASTLE, NOTTINGHAM, ST ALBANS, SHEFFIELD, WINDSOR and EUROPE

DIRECTORS

To secure the best appointments at senior level needs more than good advice, accurate career objectives and succinct presentation.

InterExec not only provides career advice to successful executives but also retains the unique facility of our subsidiary company InterMex to bridge the critical gap between counselling and the right job.

InterMex maintains a data base which comprises 6,000 unadvertised vacancies per annum, providing the unique confidential Inplacement® Service.

If you are considering a move or need a new challenge then telephone (071-930 5041) for an exploratory meeting without obligation.

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Landseer House,
19 Charing Cross Rd,
LONDON WC2H 0ES.
Tel: 071-930 5041

INTER EXEC

The service offered by Interexec is free and can be used independently of the Consulting Service

SENIOR MANAGERS

INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES BRUSSELS

is holding a competition, on the basis of qualifications and tests, to draw up a reserve list for the recruitment of (two)

SECURITY OFFICERS (clerical assistants)

The work will consist of ensuring the protection and security of persons in the context of the Council's activities, the confidentiality of meetings and information and the surveillance of buildings, equipment, car-parks and garages.

Main conditions of eligibility for the competition:
 secondary education to minimum school-leaving age certified by a diploma or equivalent professional experience;
 a very good knowledge of one of the official languages of the Communities: Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish and a satisfactory knowledge of another of these languages. A satisfactory knowledge of French is required, sufficient for the duties to be performed. Knowledge of Dutch or English would be welcome; date of birth after 31 December 1954; training in the field of security, with particular reference to the protection of persons, fire-fighting and first aid to injured persons; at least four years' vocational experience in the field of security.

Place of employment: Brussels.

The text of the notification of competition and the compulsory application form may be obtained by writing, on a postcard, by 25 January 1991, to Recruitment Department, competition C-322-ST, General Secretariat of the Council, rue de la Loi 170, B-1048 Brussels.

Closing date for submitting official applications: 4 February 1991.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

FAIRHURST COMPUTER SYSTEMS LIMITED

Are moving from Hale to Sale, having outgrown their existing premises. We now need a variety of staff to help us fit the new premises as quickly as possible. In particular we are looking for:

SOFTWARE SUPPORT ENGINEERS

Highly experienced in PICK and/or UNIX you will have some commercial experience to assist in solving our customers problems with speed and accuracy. You will be self-motivated, dedicated and prepared to work hard. If you have a twin we'll take them as well because we need 2! Salary will depend on experience but will be within range of £10k to £15k plus company car.

ANALYST/PROGRAMMER(S)

Again with PICK and/or UNIX experience, you will be capable of visiting a customers site to discuss their requirements and ultimately to document specifications to user and programming levels. Ensuring that both software is produced to specification with the ability to produce software on demand shall be key responsibilities. Experience dictates remuneration, within a range of £12k to £16k plus company car.

All the above positions attract our usual extensive company benefits which include private health care (including immediate family), pensionable service after six months and free foreign holiday accommodation after a full years service.

If you have the right qualifications for any of the above positions apply, in writing, to Paul Schofield, Financial Director, Fairhurst Computer Systems Ltd, The Courtyard, Ashley Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 3HS

Project Finance Manager

Jubilee Line Extension Project
Central London
c.£27,000

The Jubilee Line Extension represents one of the decade's most important investments in London's future. Running from Green Park in the West to Stratford in the East, the 15.4 km route will take about five years to build at a cost of about £1000m.

Clearly, first-class financial management will be a critical factor in the successful completion of the project. That's why we need a qualified accountant of the highest calibre to take on the vital role of Project Finance Manager. Reporting to the Project Director and managing a small team, you'll enjoy substantial independence with responsibility for:

- Providing detailed expenditure information, financial reports and cash-flow statements for effective management of Project costs
- Ensuring contractors and other suppliers are paid on time
- Compiling long and short term budgets and cash-flows ensuring also that Government funding procedures are observed
- Timely reconciliation of General and Project Cost ledgers
- Co-ordinating production of Line Manager's budgets.

With at least seven years' experience in a high-pressure commercial environment, you will be able to bring a hands-on approach and an eye for detail to all financial aspects of the project. You are likely to have experience of computer-based systems and will certainly possess the confidence to communicate effectively at senior levels.

An organisation where there is always space to develop your career, we also offer excellent salary and free travel on Underground and Bus services, plus a 75% discount on British Rail travel.

Employment will be on a 2-year contract initially, with every expectation of an extension for the whole project.

To apply, please write, quoting reference UMF/758X, enclosing your cv and daytime telephone number to: Angela Gainsford or Christopher Hale, Management Recruitment, London Underground Limited, Broadway Buildings, London SW1 0BD. Tel: 071-227 3370/3129.

Working Towards Equality

Finance And Administration Manager

*East Midlands,
£27,000 negotiable,
Car And Executive Package*

This client company, formed specifically for the generation and sale of electricity under the government's privatisation initiative is a joint venture between three of the industry's major forces. It is anticipated that on completion of the construction phase the new power station will produce a turnover of £70-£80m per annum. This newly created position, reporting to the General Manager and being a member of a very small management team will be responsible for all financial and administration matters during the construction phase and the subsequent operational phases. The emphasis in the early days will be the establishment of all systems and financial plans and the implementation and adherence to financial facilities agreements through the completion and submission of drawdown requests. There will be a switch during the operational phase towards company accounting and the repayment of loans and facilities.

Clearly, candidates will need to be well versed in all aspects of facilities agreements, stipulated loss values, computerised systems and financial modelling and have the drive and initiative to establish a pro-active finance function from a total start-up situation.

Male or female candidates should submit in confidence a comprehensive c.v. or telephone for a Personal History Form to: *P. Hall, Hoggett Bowers plc, 70 St. James's Street, NOTTINGHAM, NG1 6FJ, 0602 412019, Fax: 0602 474819, quoting Ref E18004/ST.*

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GAS WATCHDOG SEEKS TECHNICAL ADVISERS

The Office of Gas Supply (OFGAS) is seeking specialist advice on the issuing of authorisations to supply gas through pipes and the costs of connecting new customers.

OFGAS regulates the gas supply industry and is headed by the Director General of Gas Supply, James McKinnon, whose duties and functions are laid down in the Gas Act 1986.

One of the functions of the Director General is to authorise the supply of gas through pipes, by suppliers other than British Gas. Authorisations cover a range of types of supply - natural gas, LPG and occasional specialist gases - in a variety of circumstances within the leisure, commercial and industrial sectors. The primary purpose of issuing authorisations is to ensure the safety of gas supplies.

In granting authorisations the Director General requires a "competent person" to certify that individual supply schemes comply, or after necessary improvements, can be made to comply with safety standards laid down in legislation. These include various regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Pipelines Act 1962, the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1984 and the Gas Quality Regulations 1983.

"Competent persons" are employed by the gas supplier but the Director General designates suitably qualified and experienced gas engineers (normally of chartered status) as "competent

persons". He will in future also ensure that standards are maintained by a series of regular site visits to assess independently the work of "competent persons".

Specialist advice is therefore needed to assist the Director General in designating "competent persons" (there are around 60 at present) and to undertake a regular programme of visits throughout Great Britain (approximately 20 site visits a year are envisaged). More general advice on the safety issues arising from authorisations may also be required.

In addition, the Director General requires advice on the charges levied by British Gas for connecting new customers where these are disputed. Advice is needed in some 15 cases per year.

Proposals are invited to act as consultants either for the vetting of "competent persons", or advising on connection charges, or both. These should include a description of all relevant experience, the qualifications of the person or persons to be involved in the work and the expected level of fees.

Proposals, which must be submitted by 14 January 1991, should be sent to Mr G McGregor at the Office of Gas Supply, Southside, 105, Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QT. A copy of OFGAS' standard terms and conditions of contract and any further information, if required, may be obtained by telephoning either Mr G McGregor or Mr C Atkins on 071-828 0898.

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Both positions offer scope for further development in line with the expansion of the site which is expected to be considerable.

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Gosling fattens to golden goose

Rex Bellamy casts an admiring eye over the latest enterprise in the old new town of Welwyn Garden City: a sports complex that will challenge belief

Welwyn Garden City, 70 years old, still basks in its later renown as a "new town" of the late 1940s. In the 1990s, it is achieving fresh fame via a multi-sports complex so comprehensive that it has been described as the equivalent of half a dozen sports centres on one site.

The 52-acre Gosling Sports Park, on the outskirts of the town, just east of the A1(M), already caters for 13 sports, not counting card games and mechanical fitness aids (the latter will have 50 muscle-stretching "stations") and is roping in two more sports.

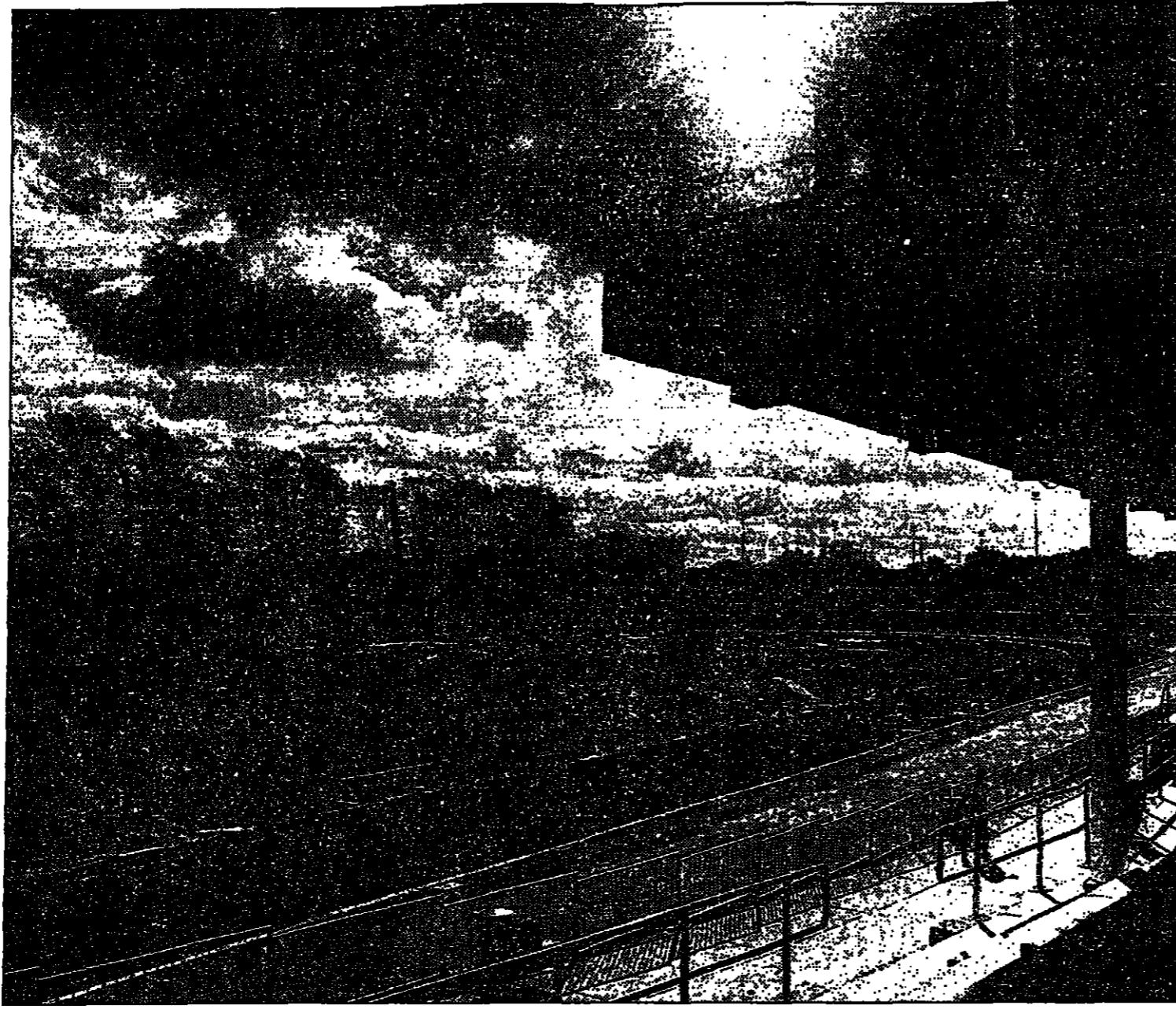
Recently much of the place has been a messy construction site. Existing facilities are being improved and in some cases relocated. New facilities have yet to be completed. But the sports and ancillary premises should all be fully operational by the end of next year and, subject to planning permission, the enterprise should have a 140-bed hotel in 1992. The hotel venture, which has been reduced to two tenders, will cost the private sector an estimated £10 million.

The banked cycling track, a six-lane athletics track, two football pitches, a golf driving range, a dry ski slope and a bunch of indoor sports — squash, badminton, volleyball, basketball, gymnastics, the martial arts and trampolining — have long been familiar at what used to be known as the Gosling Stadium.

Within the past few months, the range of sports has been extended by a floodlit synthetic surface for hockey. The facility can be adapted for five-a-side football or for tennis. A tennis and bowls centre, a surprising combination of sports, opened this month. And swimmers need not go far; there is an open-air pool in the adjacent, wooded parkland known as Stanborough Lakes, and an indoor pool at Hatfield. Ultimately, too, there will be a splash pool in the structural link between the hotel and a health and fitness centre.

In short, the Gosling Sports Park and its environs will satisfy a wide range of tastes among those who enjoy getting tired in the cause of fitness.

The dry ski slope is being shifted and extended from 65 metres to 140 metres — plus a wetting system to make it faster, two ski lifts, a nursery slope, instruction and ski repair services and a ski lodge. All that should be in



The Garden City goes to town: over the sunken stadium, the velodrome and the athletics track, the sun shines on a corner of the complex

business a year hence. A golf driving range, which opened this month, is also being moved and extended from nine bays to 24, with a shop and a professional.

The £1 million tennis and bowls centre has been granted £500,000 by the ITT — the Indoor Tennis Initiative funded by the All England Club, the Lawn Tennis Association and the Sports Council — and also benefits from a three-year deal, worth more than £135,000, with Puma, which has similar arrangements with the Sunderland and Wigan ITT ventures. Tennis will have six indoor courts and five synthetic grass outdoor courts, all floodlit. There will be eight indoor bowls rinks and an outdoor green with room for six ends.

Brian Worthington, the general manager, and Peter Kirkham, his assistant director of leisure with Welwyn Hatfield Council, are understandably proud of what is happening. Capital expenditure on the new facilities is, they say,

costing about £6.2 million. Of this, £3.7 million is coming from the resources of the Welwyn Hatfield Sports Centre Trust and the bank loans the trust has arranged. The purpose of the trust, which has managed the complex for 30 years and works in harness with the council, is to provide recreational facilities for the district.

The council has granted the enterprise £2 million and the ITT's £500,000 completes the £6.2 million. "It's a unique partnership," Worthington says, "between the local authority, the trust, industry and individual club members who have come together over the years."

There's a nominal membership fee of £10 a year. We have more than 6,000 members and are targeting up to 12,000. Membership is more an advance booking facility, though it's also a basis for users and gives a sense of belonging. But we didn't want to make the Sports Park

exclusive. We're going to retain the membership system to encourage use but will mix it with the principle of pay and play."

That last point is where the emphasis will lie: anybody can turn up and pay on the spot for whatever sport they fancy — even if it is nothing more strenuous than flexing elbows at the bars while the very young have fun in the nursery's supervised "soft-play area".

Worthington and Kirkham stress that the Sports Park welcomes both novices and experts and has the facilities to help the former category rise towards the latter. "This is not just for the elite," Worthington says. "Nor is it casual. It's a mixture of everything, including an opportunity to socialise for the doers rather than the talkers."

looking to bring into sport the people of tomorrow, and take them up towards the highest level."

Work on the old stadium's renovations and extensions began in January. In the new year there will be more than a hundred full-time or part-time staff. Running costs are now about £400,000 a year and will rise beyond £1 million by the time the complex is finished.

The site has long been impressive because of the visual impact of the sunken stadium containing the velodrome and athletics track.

Before long the range and quality of the facilities will challenge belief. Whatever one's age and abilities, whatever one's recreational preference, the important thing is to tackle something testing and aim high: to do it, or at least try to do it, rather than merely talk about doing it. The Gosling Sports Park is definitely for the doers rather than the talkers.

SPORTS LETTERS

Treating union — and league — with respect

From Mr James Corbett

It was both refreshing and reassuring to read the letter from Mr Dudley Wood of the Rugby Football Union (December 13). Refreshing because it is unusual to see a rugby union official acknowledge that there are any merits in the 13-a-side code, let alone praise the performance of its national team. Reassuring because it was a tonic to the plain that one thing never changes: the snobbish disdain of the RFU for rugby league.

It is fair to say (as Mr Wood does) that the two games are different, albeit with some similarities. It is the differences which Mr Wood picks that belie his comment that there is no love for the game.

Rugby injuries

From Mr Roy White

Sir, I read with interest the letter from George Crawford (November 28) in the wake of a serious injury sustained in a schools rugby union match. Quite apart from the difficulties inherent in his opinion of rugby for young players might be best served by those rather than age, there is an alternative approach.

This summer, a party of 40 players from this school went on tour to New Zealand and Australia, where there are specific law variations for younger players, in the interests of greater safety. Of particular interest are those relating to the scrummage, which include, among others, that it may not take place nearer than five metres to the try line, that it must not move more than 1.5 metres in any direction, that both hookers must strike for the ball, that locks must bind outside the legs of the props, that the No. 8 must bind in a central position, and that the ball should not be held unduly long in the scrum.

There is also a greater insistence on the "crouch-touch-pause-engage" sequence when forming a scrum.

In our experience, this did not in any way devalue the scrummage, and there was still the need, for specialist players in the front row, in no way did it reduce the vigorous nature of forward play in general.

However, the deliberate taking away of the incentive and means for driving or wheeling the scrummage achieved the object of "depowering" the set-piece in the games we played.

The scrummages did not collapse and no players were "popped". Without the confrontational elements, scrummages are over quickly, and, given the additional restrictions imposed on the scrum half, the game gets more quickly on the move than is often the case here.

An article in the British Medical Journal in January

Ruination of sport

From Mr Patrick Tallack

It is simply a distortion of the truth to assert that the league code "provides a form of rugby for those who wish to play for cash rewards" as if that were its sole rationale. Of course some league players are openly professional sportmen: about five per cent of them. The remaining 95 per cent club, school and college players who play for the love of the game.

It is correct, but misleading, to say that (although he ignores Fulham) the professional game is played in four counties. Correct or not as to the professional game, however Mr Wood ignores the fact that amateur game is played

Zealand doctors — one a former All Black, the other a former provincial front-row forward — reviewed three seasons of the domestic variations and estimated that, according to previous experience, nine cervical spinal cord injuries could have been predicted in this period.

However, only one had occurred in the hands of an inexperienced player being "popped" by a much stronger opposition. (In fact, they are convinced that this kind of injury can be eliminated altogether, by insisting that opposing rows engage and stabilise themselves before the remainder of the players take up their positions.)

I am mindful that this is not conclusive proof of these variations alone, since those introduced by the Rugby Football Union in 1983-84 were taken on board at the same time. However, if, as is very likely, the additional measures were responsible for only a small percentage of the improvement, this must surely not be ignored. If only one neck injury is prevented, it is worthwhile.

Yours sincerely,
ROY WHITE,
Master i/c rugby,
The King's School,
Canterbury, Kent.

From Mr N. K. Douglas

Sir, Mr George Crawford and Mr M. A. and Mrs M. Pomery (Sports Letters, December 6) are right to be concerned, as are many other supporters of rugby football, but do they really want the scrum to be withdrawn?

One of the great joys of the game is that it can be played by boys of all shapes and sizes. I am familiar with the Australian version, where no pushing is allowed in the scrums and there is no place for well-built prop forward types! In Sydney, knowing that they are fairly sure to win their own ball, the boys have evolved a pattern of playing eight mobile flankers in their scrums, relying on them to move quickly to the breakdown in lots of tackles. This mode of play, and

engaging the scrum-half with

Better use of racing's assets

From Mr T. L. Morshead

Sir, Lord Hartington's address at the Gimmerac Diner (report, December 12) was predictable and unimaginative. There is no denying that racing's finances are inextricably entwined with betting turnover and that racing and betting lead a symbiotic existence. The bookmaking industry, whether from the Tot or from the Levy, should promote a reasonable contribution to racing, but to concentrate almost entirely on changes to the way in which racing is funded by bettors will not affect levels of betting/tax/profits/levy, etc. seems to miss the point.

Racing will never benefit from the slice it takes from the betting cake unless the cake grows. The way in which bookmakers are allowed to market their service plays a part in this, but it is in the hands of the racing authorities to market themselves to their potential customers.

Lord Hartington rightly stated that "racing in whatever form it takes is integral to the leisure pound". He went on to say that "there has been a lot of talk about self-help — let us mean it and let us make it work". All very well, but where's the substance. The racing industry has a valuable product

that has been severely under-marketed. The future of racing will depend on the organic growth of the market, i.e. to bring more people into the market and through this increase and develop levels of attendance, interest and betting turnover both on and off course.

The racing industry needs to instigate both at national level, and course by course, marketing initiatives which, through their success, will enable racing to be more self-reliant. The problem is not necessarily one of money, it is one of self-help. It just needs commitment. Money and effort must be given to the way in which "Racing" is packaged to the consumer; the correct target marketing of the product; the facilities and comfort offered to the customer; extended advertising and sponsorship opportunities; cross-marketing between racecourses and other products and services; utilisation of potential retail space and of land space; development of racecourse facilities in non-racing time; continuing development of corporate hospitality especially at less "important" courses.

Yours faithfully,
T. L. MORSHEAD,
Prateshead Cottage,
Tanhurst Lane,
Holmbury St. Mary,
Nr Dorking, Surrey.

"narrow miss" to engender such a feeling of failure that she decided to retire early?

I feel that Lord's implied criticism of Mr Hamilton Smith in decrying umbrella jobs is not borne out by the facts.

Before his appointment as director of swimming for Scotland in 1984, Scotland had won only two Eight Nations contests. Since then, they have had four wins, a second (by half a point) and a third; there were eight Scots in the Olympics of 1984 and seven in those of 1988; and a representation of nine in the Great Britain team of 1985.

As coach, his principal remit has been age-group, youth swimming, which, given the current very strong Scottish youth squad, will show dividends during the 1990s.

Yours faithfully,
MALCOLM ROGERSON,
North Werper Park,
Fettes Village, Edinburgh.

In Australia, over a similar period, rugby league has been played on many cricket ovals. Indeed, the person mainly responsible for the foundation of rugby league in Australia was the cricketer, Victor Trumper.

Yours truly,
B. A. STEINBERG,
7 Denie Park,
Didsbury, Manchester.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 071-782 5046.

They should include a daytime telephone number.

Twelve marathon places for those with worthy cause

By DAVID POWELL
ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

IF YOU are among the 40,000 or so unlikely people who, having applied to run in the ADT London Marathon on April 21, have received letters of rejection in the last few days, you could still be on the starting line. For the fifth successive year, places are available to readers of *The Times* who have worldwide causes to support.

For the 1991 marathon, as for

the 1990 one, we are teaming up with Unisys Computers to help raise money for *The Times*/Unisys London Marathon Appeal. A record £108,000 was raised in our last appeal.

We have 12 places for the

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those who consider the judges

that their causes are the most

worthy to support. The appeal is

synonymous not just to supporting

the well-known national

charities, but to those of small

ones, local ones and overseas

ones. Last year, for example, the

black rhinos of Zimbabwe was a

cause that won the hearts of our

judges in 1989.

Next April's marathon will

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ever because, for the first time,

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distance running and willing-

Cardinal Ralph can strike again

By MANDARIN

JOSH Gifford, preparing his Findon team for a busy Christmas programme, should be on the mark at Towcester today with Cardinal Ralph in the second division of the Mistletoe Novices' Chase.

A novice hurdle winner at Fontwell last term, Cardinal Ralph made a most pleasing debut over fences at Leicester earlier this month, holding off the renewed challenge of Calapaez to score by a neck.

Calapaez, odds-on that day, is a classy performer with some excellent hurdling form to his credit and Cardinal Ralph can continue his winning ways at the expense of Lateral Talent and True Loop. The second division of the

novice chase can go to David Nicholson's promising Duntree, who is my nap. Despite his tender years, this tall gelding won two Irish point-to-points in 1989 and jumped like a veteran when making a successful chasing debut at Stratford last month. Duntree always had the measure of his main rival, Tiber River, in that contest and looks bound to improve from that experience.

Another success for the Condicote stable could come in the first division of the Christmas Pudding Novices' Hurdle with Fleischett Hill. This well-bred five-year-old put up his best performance to date over hurdles when a close-up third behind Cowden Cottage in a big field at

Warrick and may have the edge over the two previous winners, Blacksburg and Duo Drom.

Gifford has a live contender in Charlton Yeoman for the second division of this event. This improving five-year-old was an eye-catching third behind Young Polkey and Bell Glass at Newbury last month, but may have to give best to Jimmy Fitzgerald's Tekla.

This ex-French performer, owned by Tony Budger, was unlucky to be beaten by Skirtsook at Leicester, after making a bad mistake at the last flight, and as the winner has subsequently scored again at Worcester, the form looks well above average.

Peter Cundell's Tarcomey may be up to defying top

weight of 12 stone in the Champagne Handicap Chase, despite not having the advantage of a run this term. The ten-year-old earned the same weight to victory over a shorter distance on the course last term before going on to run a creditable sixth behind Mr Frisk in the Whitside Gold Cup.

Gordon Richards looks the trainer to follow at Kelso and I expect the master of Grey-stoke to land a treble with Jesters Prospect (12.45), Peggy Fish (1.45) and The Antartex (2.15).

Jesters Prospect showed useful form over hurdles last term, including a victory at Kelso, and can graduate successfully to the bigger obstacles in the *Racing Post* Chap (1.15).

Novices' Chase Qualifier.

Peggy Fish was not making good late headway on her debut at Ayr, where she finished fifth behind Persian House, and can open her account at the expense of Longshoreman and San Pier Niceto.

It may pay to follow Whitwood again in the Bingham Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle. Chris Bell's five-year-old is unlikely to be stopped by a 5lb penalty after a cosy victory at Sedgefield last week.

Mary Reveley, enjoying such a fine campaign from her Saltoun base, can collect a double through Egewate Fountains (12.15) and Snowfire Chap (1.15).

TOWCESTER

Selections

By Mandarin

12.30 Pitchcott Hill.
1.00 DUNTREE (nap).
1.30 Rowhedge.

2.00 Tarcomey.
2.30 Going Gets Tough.
3.00 Cardinal Ralph.
3.30 Tekla.

Michael Seely's selection: 1.00 DUNTREE (nap).

Guide to our in-line racecard

1 113143 GOOD TIMES 13 (F, 5.6) (Mrs D Robinson) B Half 12-0... S West (7) 88
Record number. Six-figure form (F = fast, S = slow) indicates how often a horse has won P - upped; U - unseated; R - brought down; D - disqualified; N - not run; V - vice; H - hood; E - Eyes; C - course and distance winner; BF - beaten favourite in last race; F = fast; S = slow; G = good; H = hard; M = soft; good to soft, heavy. Owner in brackets. Trainer, Age and weight. Rider plus any penalties. The Times Private Handicapper's rating.

Going: good

12.30 CHRISTMAS PUDDING NOVICES HURDLE (Div 1: £1,982; 2m) (18 runners)

1 322-21 BLACKBURNING 15 (G/F) (A Budge (Equeus)) Ld Jimmy Fitzgerald 5-11-4... M Dwyer 80
2 5-1 DUO DROM 15 (F) (H Fagan) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... M Lynch 94
3 6-2 CLOUTIER 15 (G) (P Fagan) R Waterer 4-10-10... B Powers 77
4 7-3 DECOUPE 15 (G) (P Fagan) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... J Alcock 77
5 8-2 KILROY 15 (F) (Trish MacCormac) P O'Connor 5-10-4... M Lynch 77
6 9-3 MIGRATION 16 (G) (L Whately) P Hodge 4-10-10... J McNeil 77
7 10-4 MOTOR CLOCK 15 (G) (P Fagan) M Brown 4-10-10... J McNeil 77
8 11-5 PATRICK 16 (G) (Mrs J Heale) M McNeil 5-10-10... R Dwyer 90
9 12-6 PITCHCOTT HILL 21 (G/F) (J Brown) D Nicholson 5-10-10... R Dwyer 90
10 13-7 ROWHEDGE 15 (G) (P Fagan) Mrs J P Jones 5-10-4... J McNeil 77
11 14-8 SHADOW RUN 15 (G) (Cousins) P Dwyer 5-10-4... M Lynch 94
12 15-9 SMITH'S CRACKER 14 (G/F) (Smith Marshall Met Co Ltd) Mrs J P Jones 4-10-10... M Lynch 94
13 16-0 TERRIFIC HAMMER 15 (G) (P Fagan) Mrs J P Jones 5-10-4... M Lynch 94
14 17-1 THE FAIR MAN 15 (F) (Peter Hinchliffe) B Curley 5-10-10... D Marples 94
15 18-2 THE GREENHORN 15 (G) (P Fagan) Mrs J P Jones 5-10-4... M Lynch 94
16 19-3 THE GREENHORN 15 (G) (P Fagan) Mrs J P Jones 5-10-4... M Lynch 94
17 20-4 CROWN'S 15 (G) (P Fagan) Mrs J P Jones 5-10-4... M Lynch 94
18 21-5 QUEEN OF SPARTA 23 (Landy) Mrs J P Jones 5-10-4... K Mooney 94
BETTING: 3-1 Blackburning, 7-2 The Shy Controller, 5-1 Duo Drom, Pitchcott Hill, 11-2 Smith's Cracker, 15-2 Shadow Run, 17-2 others.

1886: DO BE FREE 4-10-11 M Plemen (9-1) Mrs J P Jones 16-11

FORM FOCUS BLACKBURNING made mistakes, but easily beat Merry Master at Cheltenham (2m, good) to win DUO DROM best. Cooks Lane (11) (near clear) at Wincanton (2m, good). PITCHCOTT HILL stayed 100% at Towcester (2m, good). RED SCORPION 15 (G/F) to Strong Shadow Run (2m, soft).

1886: CASTLE CAVES 6-11-3 (McNeil 11) D Giddens 11 ran

FORM FOCUS DUNTREE Impressed well when beating Tiber River (7) on chasing debut at Stratford (2m, good) to impressively win the 2000 Guineas' ESCAPE ON (convinced when 12th 8m to 7th) again at Worcester (2m, good) to 10th result. Selection: DUNTREE

1886: CHRISTMAS PUDDING NOVICES CHASE (Div II: £2,247; 2m 5f 11-10yd) (12 runners)

1 131145 DUNTREE 22 (G/F, 6.5) (M Dwyer) D Nicholson 5-11-7... R Dwyer 80
2 12-3 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
3 13-4 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
4 14-5 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
5 15-6 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
6 16-7 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
7 17-8 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
8 18-9 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
9 19-10 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
10 20-11 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
11 21-12 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
12 22-13 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
13 23-14 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
14 24-15 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
15 25-16 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
16 26-17 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
17 27-18 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
18 28-19 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
19 29-20 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
20 30-21 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
21 31-22 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
22 32-23 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
23 33-24 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
24 34-25 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
25 35-26 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
26 36-27 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
27 37-28 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
28 38-29 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
29 39-40 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
30 41-42 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
31 43-44 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
32 45-46 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
33 47-48 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
34 49-50 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
35 51-52 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
36 53-54 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
37 55-56 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
38 57-58 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
39 59-60 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
40 61-62 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
41 63-64 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
42 65-66 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
43 67-68 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
44 69-70 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
45 71-72 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
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49 79-80 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
50 81-82 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
51 83-84 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
52 85-86 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
53 87-88 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
54 89-90 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
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57 95-96 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
58 97-98 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
59 99-100 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
60 101-102 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
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67 115-116 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
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108 197-198 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
109 199-200 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
110 201-202 DUNTREE 22 (G/F) Mrs D Heale 5-10-4... R Dwyer 80
111 203-204 DUNTREE 22 (G

CRICKET

Stewart left holding the baby as he tries to establish identity

From ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, BALLARAT

THE England cricket selectors last night offered a plain guide to their plans for the Christmas Test match in Melbourne, completely reorganising their batting order and omitting the all-rounder, Chris Lewis, from the four-day game with Victoria, starting today.

Alec Stewart's dubious reward for the most convincing batman of his England career was to be thrust back into the critical No. 3 position, with David Gower dropping two places to No. 5 and Robin Smith retreating to No. 6.

Michael Atherton, prematurely banished from England's one-day team, returned to resume the opening pairing with Graham Gooch, which enjoyed such success last summer.

There is no scope for England to reshape the batting yet again before Christmas, so Stewart can expect to regain the Test position in which he began last winter's series against West Indies. Whether or not he welcomes it is another matter.

Stewart's value to the England side has been his versatility and willingness to accept whatever responsibility comes his way. These are mixed virtues to a cricketer who has never yet established an identity within the side and again has been installed in the problem area.

It was a difficult one for the selectors. Their view that Gower will be more relaxed and effective at No. 5 is easy to share and the logical move would have been a straight swap with Smith. But at the moment Smith is barely justifying a place in the side and his transparent tension ruled out promotion.

Quite why Lamb could not have stepped up to No. 3, as his vast experience indicated he should, is unexplained. The selectors may have been reluctant to uproot one of their few constant qualities, equally Lamb himself may have been slow to volunteer if he feels so comfortable at No. 4. Either way, Stewart is left holding the baby.

Atherton's recall suggests that Wayne Larkins has only a peripheral part to play on the remainder of this tour unless England manage to make further progress in the World Series competition.

Hugh Morris's future on the tour looks ever more tenuous but that of the second replacement player, Phillip DeFreitas, appears to be flourishing with the news that Lewis, his former team-mate at Leicester, is missing this game and must, therefore, be unlikely to feature in Melbourne.

Lewis's indisputable talent

has never yet been matched by a resilience to injury or sundry ailments and the management has shown signs of impatience with him over his latest worry, something undiagnosed in his back. Peter Lush, the tour manager, said last night that Lewis had been available to play against Victoria, so the only conclusion is that DeFreitas was chosen ahead of him in the 13 listed.

Good news for England was that Gladstone Small had suffered no effects from his first serious practice after a fifth strain and would play.

The big attraction yesterday was the appearance of Merv Hughes, anxious to regain his Australian place and sporting an almost entirely shaved head and a moustache which covers his lower face.

Crowds gathered at the

town's Eastern Oval to watch Hughes and most of his side practise but there were later arrivals by Jones and O'Donnell, members of the Australian team which contrived, extraordinarily, to lose its unbeaten World Series record in Hobart on Tuesday.

With their qualification for the three one-day finals in serious doubt, England yesterday began negotiations with the Australian Cricket Board for a standby first-class match during the same period. New South Wales, somehow left off the England itinerary for the first time this century, are the obvious opponents.

For now, however, England have weighed matters on their mind and it is appropriate that they re-engage Test match mode in this historic gold-mining town which, in 1854, staged the first and only civil battle of Australian history.

The miners, shackled by licence charges and deprived of a vote, took on the soldiers in a one-sided affair which became known as the Eureka Blockade. It lasted only 15 minutes and cost 35 lives but the beaten miners made such an impression that licences were abolished and all were granted.

They had lost the battle but they won the war, which is something England will be happy to emulate. The result against Victoria is not important; all that matters is a revival of the sparky confidence with which they may yet bring this Ashes series back to life.

ENGLAND (from: S P O'Donnell (captain), G M Williams, D J Siddle, D M Gower, D R Hockley, D L Jones, M J Hughes, P R Reiffel, D W Flannigan, P McIntrye, P W Jackson.

ENGLAND X1 (from: G A Gooch (captain), A J Stewart, A. Lamb, D I Gough, R A Simpson, R C Pocock, M P Blackett, P C Tufnell, D E Malcolm, P J DeFreitas, E E Hemmings.



Power play: Barbara Griffiths, of Middlesex, serving in her quarter-final victory over Glynne Humphries-Davies during the Christmas tournament staged by the British Women's Tennis Association at Queen's Club, London. Anna Simpkin also reached the semi-finals, after crushing Caroline Herbert. Results, page 35

RUGBY UNION

Promotional firm signs up

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE Rugby Football Union (RFU) has reached agreement with a promotional company to represent the interests of the England squad in the new commercial era. WHJ Promotions, whose partners include Bob Willis, the former England cricketer, and David his brother, have been given a one-year contract, the terms of which are being drafted.

At one stage it had been suggested that the RFU might act as agents for its players but Dudley Wood, the secretary, said: "It's no part of our activities to make money for players, we are running an amateur sport. We have no fundamental objection to players making money outside the game, indeed we have no right to interfere, but we are distancing ourselves if we like."

Our intention is to act as a watchdog from the point of view of rugby football and for the players, because we don't want to see players ripped off in any way.

Nonetheless RFU officials agreed that the WHJ presentation was the best of the three companies shortlisted. "What we are now doing is working with them on an agreement as to what can and can't be done," Michael Pearcey, the RFU president, said yesterday. "We are involving the players all the

time, though we are sticking firmly to the belief that material benefit can come from outside the game and not from inside."

The Willis brothers recognise that and the players do, too, but there are a lot of grey areas.

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It is a happy coincidence that Princess Anne is not only an enthusiastic supporter of rugby, but patron of the Scottish Rugby Union.

The RFU is optimistic that work on the East Stand can begin after the World Cup next year. Its application is before Richmond borough council and no problems are anticipated.

"We are looking at ways of financing it," Dudley Wood said, "which will avoid heavy loans, certainly not for the sake of doing so but the fruits of exhaustive research by Wilde in India and London that brook no

FOOTBALL

New contract is the reward for Strachan leadership at Leeds

By IAN ROSS

GORDON Strachan, the inspiration behind the renaissance of Leeds United, has been rewarded with a new two-year contract. Strachan has agreed an extension to his present contract which will keep him with the Yorkshire club until 1993, when he will be aged 36.

Although the former Scottish international midfield player has yet to put pen to paper, he is expected to complete the formalities of the recently negotiated deal before his present contract expires on June 1.

"I have yet to sign the deal but everything has been sorted out and I am delighted," Strachan said. "I would love to finish my career here at Leeds United. We have come a long way in a very short time and I can only agree with those people who suggest that there are more exciting times ahead for this club."

Strachan, who moved to Elland Road from Manchester United for £300,000 in March last year, helped guide Leeds

towards the second division championship last season and has been a key figure as the club has successfully re-established itself as one of the most powerful in English football this season.

"I am overjoyed with the news that Gordon is to sign a new deal," Howard Wilkinson, the Leeds manager, said.

"His signing was one of the best pieces of business I have ever done as a football manager and I bless the day the deal went through."

"Every manager wants to be in a position to sign top quality players like him and when that happens, and they fulfill all hopes and expectations, it is extremely rewarding. When I look at his performances, it is hard to imagine that he is now 33 years-old."

"His mind is still so very alert and he keeps himself superbly fit. When I signed him, most people questioned the wisdom of the transfer and some insinuated that the only

reason he was coming to Leeds was to wind down towards retirement. Now, those same people are praising him almost every week."

Bryan Robson, the former England captain, will start a senior game for Manchester United for the first time since last May's FA Cup final replay against Crystal Palace on Saturday against Wimbledon.

Robson, who has made only two brief appearances as a substitute since his recovery from two operations on a seriously damaged Achilles tendon, has been recalled to help combat United Wimbledon's unique long-ball tactics.

"He will have a flexible role and will hopefully use his defensive know-how when it is needed most," Alex Ferguson, the United manager, said.

"He is looking strong and his return is a boost for the club and for himself. He has worked very hard to get back and he made a terrific impact after coming on against Coventry City last weekend."

Five-goal haul for van Basten

By JOHN GOODBODY

VALLETTA (Reuter) — Marco van Basten put memories of his disappointing World Cup finals behind him yesterday and scored five goals in The Netherlands' 8-0 trouncing of Malta in a European championship qualifier.

A three-goal burst by van Basten within 25 minutes of the start set up the Dutch, and by the end, Malta were licking the wounds of their heaviest international defeat on home soil.

Two other goals in the break completed the AC Milan forward's collection, with Dennis Bergkamp, twice, and Aron Winter, both of Ajax, also scoring.

Van Basten opened the scoring after ten minutes, and added his and The Netherlands' second after 20. His third followed five minutes later when, with his back to goal, he controlled Hulst's pass on his chest before firing an overhead shot past the goalkeeper, Cluet.

Winter, a substitute for Erwin Koeman, made it four in the 51st minute, before Bergkamp and van Basten took advantage of a suffering defence to complete the rout.

Portugal among England's rivals for a place in the European championship finals in Sweden in 1992, achieved a promising victory in Volos, Greece, yesterday, beating Greece 2-1.

"Why should that player have to sit in the stands for an automatic three-match suspension? Why should referees be said to be right when they are clearly wrong?" Taylor said.

"If future instances of such injustice arise we will challenge the FA through the courts. There are so many inconsistencies concerning the interpretation of the disciplinary rules that the professional foul and the offside law by referees that the fact that there is no provision

"It is an injustice that the FA is prepared to use television evidence to bring disciplinary charges against clubs and players but that it will not allow television evidence to be used to support a player who may have been sent off unjustly.

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- SPORTS LETTERS 32
- RACING 33
- CRICKET 34

SPORT

Adams jailed for four months

By LOUISE TAYLOR

FOOTBALL closed ranks behind Tony Adams, the Arsenal captain and England international defender, who was jailed for four months yesterday after admitting that he had driven while three times over the legal drink-drive limit in May.

Adams, aged 24, was given a nine-month jail sentence, with five months suspended for reckless driving and three months to run concurrently for driving with excess alcohol. Adams was also banned from driving for two years and ordered to pay £500 costs.

Last night, he was in prison in Chelmsford and was said to be considering, with his solicitor, an appeal against the sentence.

George Graham, the manager of Arsenal, spoke on Adams's behalf at Southend Crown Court. Afterwards, Ken Friar, the club secretary, said: "The boy made a mistake and he has been dealt with. The club will be taking no further action; we fined him £2,000 in the summer when the offence was committed. Our position now is that we will stand by our player."

This has come as a very great surprise to everyone who knows Tony. He is a very level headed lad, which is one of the reasons George Graham awarded him the captaincy. Another is his resilient character, which I am sure will stand him in good stead in prison. But Tony is consulting with his lawyer and may decide to appeal."

Graham said he was considering helping with an appeal on Adams's behalf. "Tony has been a colossus for Arsenal in the past and will be a colossus in the future," he said.

Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), said: "I have every sympathy for Tony. Everyone comes under the law of the land, but Tony appears to have been dealt with very severely, and this has come as a real shock."

"All young people can be high spirited at times, and Tony is no different from any other youngster. I think a custodial sentence is the wrong punishment. I cannot believe it is the most appropriate penalty. He will need people at Arsenal to put a

TONY ADAMS

Born: Romford, October 10 1966.
Playing career
Club: Arsenal. Debut v Sunderland, November 5, 1983. Appearances: 248 (all competitions). Captain since spring 1988.
Last season: Debut for England, February 18, 1987 (against Spain). Appearances: 18 till 5 under-21.
Honours: 1987: PFA Young Player of the Year; Littlewoods Cup winner. 1988: League championship; Littlewoods Cup runner-up.

sympathetic arm around him when he comes out."

David Bloomfield, the Football Association's press officer, said: "This is a clear indication that footballers are not beyond the law of the land. And it is a timely reminder for anyone at this time of the year."

Any further disciplinary measures would come from the FA and not from Graham Taylor, the England manager. All of the England candidates were warned at the beginning of the season that they risked being omitted from the squad if they were found to be guilty of misconduct either on or off the pitch.

At the very least Adams, who played in England's last international against the Republic of Ireland five weeks ago, will miss the next game against Cameroon in February.

Mick Quinn, the Newcastle United forward, who was jailed for 21 days after admitting driving while disqualified in 1986, when he was with Portsmouth, yesterday spoke of the sense of isolation Adams can expect.

"Being stuck in a cell for 23 hours a day is terrible, especially for a footballer," Quinn said. "You have plenty of time to think and it made me appreciate the freedom you have as a footballer, out in the open air with thousands of people watching you."

"I was only allowed one newspaper each day. There was nothing else to do but read and try to keep fit. The worst thing was listening to the radio on a Saturday afternoon for results. It was so frustrating not being able to do anything about what was happening out there. And when I came out, I was taunted by supporters."

Adams, who is unmarried, began his career as an apprentice at Highbury, and the highlight of his club career came in 1989 when he led Arsenal to the league championship. By then, he had already played for England at the age of 20.

He has played a leading role in Arsenal's campaign this season but his imprisonment yesterday, for offences committed in May, was the latest and most severe setback in a troubled year.

In the summer, he was omitted, at the last minute,

from the England party that went to the World Cup in Italy and he did not play again for England until last month. Last week he was in the England B team which drew in Algeria.

Earlier this month, Adams

was sent off for the first time in his career after committing a professional foul against Luton Town. On Monday, the FA rejected his appeal against the dismissal and upheld an automatic suspension.

Bending the law, page 2

Hoddle comes home to stay

By LOUISE TAYLOR

GLENN Hoddle, the former England and Tottenham Hotspur midfield player, has been released from the final six months of his contract at Monaco, the French first division club, after failing to recover from a knee injury.

Dennis Roach, Hoddle's agent, and officials at Monaco yesterday confirmed that the club had terminated his contract and that the player had returned to England with his family.

If he recovers, Chelsea

would be favourites to sign him. Otherwise, Hoddle nurtures ambitions to enter coaching or management, and Bobby Campbell, the Chelsea manager, has indicated his willingness to provide him with a job at Stamford Bridge.

After earning 53 caps during a sometimes glorious but often erratic career with England, Hoddle left Tottenham, where he won FA Cup and UEFA Cup medals, for Monaco in the summer of 1987.

Along with his fellow-Englishman, Mark Hateley, who is now with Rangers, Hoddle subsequently proved a huge success in France where his passing skills were fully appreciated and Monaco won the League. However injury has kept him out of the Monaco first team for the past 12 months.

• Celtic yesterday appointed Terry Cassidy, a former Nottingham Forest player, as the club's first chief executive.

Cassidy, aged 53, whose playing career was curtailed by injury, was previously managing director of George Outram, publishers of the Glasgow Herald and Evening Times.

Cassidy said he had no pre-conceived attitudes and that he would be "aiming to talk with everyone at the club, to get their views".

The FA had already decided on which grounds they would use and how many was described as a "misunderstanding" by Glenn Kirton, the head of the FA's external affairs. Every club in the first and second division were being invited to put its ground forward as a possible venue.

The FA will encourage those clubs interested to investigate the possibility of support from the private sector and local authority, while the FA will seek the assistance of the government. "The clubs are going to have to find money elsewhere," Kirton said.

Bill Fox, the League president, warned that there was no

chance, though, of government aid while football's authorities were fragmented.

"At this stage, we have an open mind as far as potential venues are concerned," Kirton said. "I think we need between eight and 12, but we'd be delighted if we get 20 meaningful applications, then we would have a competitive situation."

Kirton indicated that Bert Millichip, the FA chairman, had shifted his stance slightly on the question of bidding for the World Cup, which he was initially against. He described his mood at the meeting as "positive". Kirton added: "He thinks that it is right that we should put in a meaningful application and not just go through the motions."

The nine clubs which the FA had admitted lent themselves most easily to conversion, providing the capacity of 30,000 to 40,000 necessary under the criteria of Fifa, the game's governing body, were situated predominantly in the north, six of them from Manchester, Sheffield and Liverpool. In the Midlands, only Villa Park was thought suitable, while in the south, just Highbury and Stamford Bridge, even though the latter's future is open to question.

Chelsea expect around 6,000 supporters at Stamford Bridge on Boxing Day to watch the satellite pictures of their first division match at Leeds United, 200 miles away.

The London club have also arranged to screen their away

match at Luton on December 29 to save their fans from a "cheerless Christmas".

Chelsea acted after they

were given only 1,300 tickets for the game, which also has a noon kick-off.

An obvious and glaring omission was that of White Hart Lane, Twickenham, with the permission of the Rugby Football Union, was also alleged to be under consideration. It is estimated that the cost of bringing all the League's grounds up to the standard recommended by the Taylor Report, will cost about £675 million.

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